A

REPORT

OF THE

DEBATE

OF THE

IRISH BAR,

On SUNDAY, the 9th of DECEMBER, 1798,

ON THE

SUBJECT

OF AN

UNION

OF THE

LEGISLATURES

OF

GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

THE RESOLUTIONS AND PROTEST.

DUBLIN:

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1799.

BRITISH MUSEUM
30
60
DEC

IN

PURSUANCE OF THE FOLLOWING REQUISITION,

A

MEETING

OF THE

IRISH BAR,

WAS HELD, ON SUNDAY 9th DECEMBER,

"THE undersigned Members of the Bar, request you will convene a Meeting thereof, to be held at the Chancery Chamber, on Sunday next, the 9th inst. to take into consideration a subject of the utmost importance."

Edward Mayne,	J. W. Bell,
Charles Bushe,	William Saurin,
H. Joy,	W. C. Plunket,
Charles Hamilton,	A. C. M'Cartney,
Redmond Barry,	J. Jameson,
Richard Jebb,	P. Doyne,
Peter Burrowes,	R. Lyster,
John Lloyd,	Gerald O'Farrel,
William Vavasour,	W. P. Ruxton,
William Sankey,	M. J. O'Dwyer,
T. O'Driscoll,	Samuel Pendleton,
Eyre Burton Powell,	Joshua Spencer,
Beresford Burston,	John Hamilton.
Jonah Barrington,	

Pen/

In pursuance of the above requisition, Mr. Smith called a Meeting, for Sunday, at 12 o'clock.

Which having taken place, and the Chancery Chamber not being large enough to hold the Meeting—And the Hall being considered inconvenient; it was adjourned to William-street, and held at the Exhibition-house

SUNDAY, the 9th of DECEMBER.

AMBROSE SMITH Eſq. Father of the Bar being called to the Chair—He addreſſed the Meeting. Gentlemen, purſuant to a requiſition delivered to me by ſeveral reſpectable Barriſters, I have convened this Meeting. I know not the object for which it has been ſummoned, and therefore I declare myſelf ready to hear any gentleman who is diſpoſed to deliver his ſentiments. I entreat that order may be perſerved.

MR. SAURIN opened the buſineſs. Sir, I am one of thoſe who ſigned the original requiſition, and though I have always been adverſe to calling a meeting of the Bar, to agitate political ſubjects, yet when a queſtion is ſent abroad by high authority, which goes directly to deſtroy and annul for ever, the conſtitution and legiſlative independence of the country, I think it is the duty of every great body of men, and particularly the duty of the Bar, as learned in the Law and Conſtitution, to ſtep forward and declare their ſenſe on the ſubject. In times of perfect tranquillity it is their duty to do this, but at ſuch a period as the preſent, when the public are rendered incapable by the circumſtances in which they ſtand, of conſidering ſo momentous a queſtion, it becomes the duty of the Bar to declare whether it is wiſe or ſafe at ſuch a criſis to diſcuſs it. It is therefore not my intention to enter very deeply into the queſtion, whether a Union in any circumſtances might or might not be uſeful. I ſhall leave all metaphyſical diſquiſitions on that ſubject in the hands of thoſe who profeſſed themſelves capable of ſeeing into the remote conſequences of ſuch a meaſure, advantages, which to my underſtanding are totally unintelligible. I ſhall content himſelf with offering a few obvious remarks on the queſtion,

queſtion, remarks that muſt ſtrike the underſtanding and common ſenſe of every man; and I will leave the learned gentlemen, whom I addreſs, to agree in the reſolution which I will have the honour to propoſe. It was not until the month of October laſt, that the people of Ireland were told for the firſt time, that they were unworthy to govern themſelves, that they ought to ſurrender for ever the conſtitution under which, with all its imperfections, they and their anceſtors for 500 years had lived happily, and riſen, and were riſing to a degree of proſperity highly to be envied.—It was not till then that the people of Ireland were told, that the intereſts of their country, the morals, the diſpoſitions and habits of its people were more likely to be promoted and improved by the care of a Britiſh Legiſlature, than by a Parliament of their own, reſident among them. But was it not obvious to every man, that if, in caſe of a Legiſlative Union, Ireland ſhould be ſuffered to ſend an hundred members to the United Parliament, yet the Parliament thus conſtituted with five hundred Britiſh members and one hundred Iriſh, muſt be influenced by every tie of inclination, and I will add, of duty too, to prefer the intereſts of Great Britain to thoſe of Ireland, when they ſhould be found to claſh? Muſt it not be acknowledged that if the Legiſlatures of the two countries ſhould be united, their firſt care would be to diſtribute the burden of public debt and public expence equally or proportionably over every member of the empire, and muſt it not follow that the burdens of Ireland would thereby be encreaſed to the utmoſt limit of her capacity to bear? With reſpect to the morals and diſpoſitions of our people, could it be reaſonably believed that the Britiſh Miniſter would ſend over miſſionaries here to improve and reform them? Would it not be his firſt care to extract from us our proportion of taxes in defence of the empire, and

would he not then leave our morals and manners to the ſlow improvement of time and circumſtances? Yet it was for theſe advantages that the country was called on to give up for ever its independence and right to govern itſelf, and yield to the care of a foreign Legiſlature. But the Bar, and every gentleman who knows Ireland, muſt know that if ever there was a country which, more than another ſtood in need of the indulgent attention and watchful zeal of a reſident Legiſlature—one which, from its knowledge of the people, their habits, and their local circumſtances of the country, might adopt its regulations to the ſituation of the inhabitants, it was this country.——I will not, however, ſay that there can never occur a time when a Union with Great Britain on any terms would be injurious to Ireland. I will not enter into abſtract diſquiſitions on the nature and benefits of the indiviſibility and incorporation of the empire, but I will ſay, that at preſent I ſee no benefit which could accrue to Ireland from ſuch a meaſure—poſſibly however, at a future day the light might flaſh on my mind; but the advantages which ſhould at any time induce me to agree to a ſurrender of the conſtitution and independence of the country for ever, muſt be of great magnitude indeed, and clear as the ſun at noon day. With reſpect to the reaſoning of thoſe who now adviſe the meaſure, *who was the man bold enough to ſay, he was convinced that thoſe great advantages muſt accrue which the metaphyſician pretended future time would develope?* Who would be bold enough to pledge himſelf to his country that thoſe advantages would repay her for her independence? At all events it was not at the termination of a rebellion, if it was indeed terminated, the moſt alarming and ſavage which had ever ſcourged a country, that a queſtion of ſuch magnitude was to be diſcuſſed;

diſcuſſed—it was not when a foreign army of 40,000 men were in the country, and military law ſcarcely yet ſuſpended, that the people were to be aſked on the moment, whether they would give up their Conſtitution, and transfer their Legiſlative power to another country. I therefore propoſe that the learned gentlemen who have heard me, and whoſe voice the Adminiſtration and the People will probably look to with reſpect, ſhould come to the following reſolution:

"*Reſolved. That the meaſure of a Legiſlative Union of this kingdom and Great Britain, is an innovation, which it would be highly dangerous and improper to propoſe, at the preſent juncture, to this country.*"

Mr. SPENCER. Mr. Chairman, Sir, I riſe to ſecond the reſolution which has been juſt propoſed by my much reſpected friend, who has entered into the ſubject ſo fully and with ſuch ſingular ability, that I ſhall treſpaſs but for a very ſhort time upon the attention of this Aſſembly. The reſolution propoſed for our adoption, contains two propoſitions; the one declaring a Legiſlative Union between the two kingdoms, to be an innovation on the Conſtitution of this country; and the other, that the preſent ſituation of this country is moſt improper and dangerous for the propoſal of ſuch a meaſure. As to the firſt propoſition, namely, that an Union would be an innovation upon the Conſtitution; there ſurely cannot be a doubt, even for a moment. For what is the Conſtitution of this country, but the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland? By this Conſtitution, a majority of each houſe of Legiſlature decides upon all objects of Iriſh Legiſlation which come before them; but would that be the caſe in the event of an Union? Certainly not, in that caſe not only a majority

a majority would not decide, but though all the Lords and Commons of Ireland of the United Parliament were unanimous on a queſtion, which concerned Ireland alone, of which the Iriſh part of the Parliament muſt be the beſt judges, they might be overcome by the whole, or even part of the Engliſh Repreſentation. Is this the Conſtitution of Ireland? And I am not ſuppoſing an extreme caſe, it is preciſely what happened in the Britiſh Parliament, not ſix years after the Scotch Union, when on the queſtion for impoſing the malt tax on Scotland; which was directly contrary to the articles of the Union: all the Scotch members of both houſes oppoſed the meaſure, but it was carried againſt them by the Engliſh part of the United Parliament. But I ſhall ſhew from an authority, than which none can be greater, I ſhall ſhew from the authority of Mr. Locke, perhaps the moſt profound and ſyſtematic thinker, that England, or any other country ever produced, that Parliament is utterly incompetent to ſuch a meaſure, without expreſs authority from the people. It is unneceſſary for me to inform this Aſſembly, that Mr. Locke wrote his Eſſay on Civil Government, for the purpoſe of vindicating the principles of our glorious Revolution; that it was eſteemed the moſt perfect treatiſe upon the ſubject, at a time when the great queſtion of Government and civil liberty had been diſcuſſed by all the ability and learning of England—With direct reference to the Revolution, and the Engliſh Conſtitution; and that from that time unto the preſent, it has been looked up to as an oracle upon the ſubject: His words are theſe, " * The Legiſlative is " not only the ſupreme power in the commonwealth, but " ſacred and unalterable in the hands, where the commu- " nity have once placed it; nor can any other edict of any

* Locke on Government.

" body

" body elſe, in what form ſoever conceived, or by what " power ſoever backed, have the force and obligation of " a law, which has not its ſanction from that Legiſlative " which the public has choſen and appointed." And again, " The Legiſlative cannot transfer the power of mak- " ing laws to any other hands: for it being but a dele- " gated power from the people, they who have it cannot " paſs it over to others. The power of the *Legiſlative*, " being derived from the people by a poſitive voluntary " grant and inſtitution, can be no other than what that " poſſitive grant conveyed; which being only to make " *laws*, and not to make *Legiſlators*, the *Legiſlative* can " have no power to transfer their authority of making " laws and place it in other hands." But it may be ſaid, that all this is juſt and true in theory, but irreconcileable with practical politics. On the contrary, the principle has been recently recognized, and acted upon, by that very America, to whoſe example we are referred, and whoſe political wiſdom we are cautioned not to reject; and that very letter which is quoted by the author of a late pamphlet, is from the immortal Waſhington, Preſident, not of the Congreſs, but of a Convention immediately elected from the people, which ſat at Philadelphia, in the ſummer of 1787, for the expreſs purpoſe of reviſing the American Conſtitution, to which the Congreſs conceived itſelf not impowered without direct authority from the people.

And now, Sir, as to the ſecond part of the reſolution, I am really curious to hear an argument, why the preſent ſituation of the country, when the agitations of a moſt deep laid, wide extended, and furious rebellion, have not yet ſubſided, ſhould be ſelected for the bringing forward a queſtion of that magnitude and vitality to the Conſtitution, which muſt agitate and convulſe this country to its very centre.

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In England, ever ſince the beginning of this extraordinary war, the bringing forward of any queſtion of political innovation, even that of Parliamentary Reform, has been reprobated both in and out of Parliament, as improper and dangerous, whilſt the revolutionary ſpirit was afloat throughout Europe, and mens' minds had been unhinged and unſettled on political ſubjects; and if England, notwithſtanding her general loyalty, notwithſtanding her ſuperior learning, and her ſenſe of happineſs derived from her excellent Conſtitution, cannot bear the diſcuſſion of ſuch ſubjects; is it in unhappily diſaffected and diſtempered Ireland, that their agitation will be perfectly harmleſs? What then can be the reaſon, why the Engliſh government, in this reſpect, ſhould hold ſo different a language in Ireland from what they do in England? Why, it can be no other than this, which invincibly forces itſelf upon the underſtanding; that they would take an ungenerous and cruel advantage of the great army at preſent in this country, and of that ſuppreſſion of the public voice, which the urgency of our ſituation had rendered neceſſary for a time; but I do conjure gentlemen to conſider the awful and tremulous ſituation of this country: If, notwithſtanding our immenſe military force; if, notwithſtanding all the zeal and ardour of the Yeomanry, it required three weeks to ſubdue one thouſand French, during which period, inſurrections broke out in two different counties; what would be our ſituation, if ſome thouſands of French ſhould land in this country, (an event, againſt which nothing can inſure us), while in the height of the fermentation occaſioned by the diſcuſſion of this meaſure? Sir, I am ſure that the gentry of this country, would, at all hazards and under all circumſtances, reſiſt to their utmoſt, and to

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the laſt, the daring invaders of this kingdom; but can we calculate what effect their known diſapprobation of the meaſure, and conſequent diſguſt, would have upon the ſubordinate claſſes of the community; could the government depend even upon the regular military force; could they be certain, that that ſoldiery, which, for their own purpoſes, they have at times encouraged to deliberate, would not deliberate for themſelves? Can they be confident, that the Engliſh militia itſelf, would eſcape the epidemic agitation of the country? I have, however, heard it aſſerted, that from the circumſtances I have juſt mentioned, viz. the great military force in this country, and the ſuppreſſion of the public voice, this is the preciſe ſeaſon for the introduction of this meaſure, which could not be carried under any other circumſtances. Good God, Sir, is it poſſible that ſuch a ſentiment ſhould circulate, without circulating revolutionary principles along with it? Can it be endured to be ſaid, that the ſeaſon for introducing the moſt momentous conſtitutional queſtion, to the conſideration of the Legiſlature of a free people, is, when there is an extraordinary military force in the country, and when, from the imperiouſneſs of circumſtances, the public lips have been cloſed? It is by the frank, open, and generous conduct, which ſhould ever characterize free governments, and not by the dark and intriguing policy of deſpotic Cabinets, that the Engliſh Miniſter will ſucceed in checking the ſpirit of revolution, and all railing againſt the conduct of France, muſt be vain and hypocritical, while you yourſelf, in your practice, adopt the maxims of France; and whilſt in pamphlets, written under the auſpices of government, the incorporating policy of France is recommended, as the model for England to

follow in reſpect to this country. The Iriſh Bar has already had the honour and the ſatisfaction of ſaving this country, or contributing moſt eſſentially to its ſafety, by taking the lead in the Yeomanry inſtitution; and, I truſt, that they will now have the ſweet ſatisfaction of ſaving our country, by ſtanding between the raſh and ill-adviſed projects of the Engliſh miniſter, and miſchiefs that are incalculable.

Mr. St. George Daly moved that the further conſideration of this reſolution be adjourned to this day month.

Mr. Jameson ſeconded the motion of adjournment, and oppoſed the original reſolution, as tending to the prematurely forcing the diſcuſſion of the queſtion of an Union, between Great Britain and Ireland; a circumſtance of ſuch great magnitude and conſequence, that he thought the aſſembly were not at preſent prepared to decide on the merits of the queſtion, as having no evidence before them that a Union would be, in its effects, either beneficial or injurious to the country at large; he therefore, for himſelf, being the deſcendant of Engliſhmen, and he believed the great majority of thoſe who heard him were of the ſame deſcription, as well as ſome of the great proprietors and landed intereſts of this kingdom, did not heſitate to avow himſelf friendly to the principle of an Union between the two countries, on liberal terms, at the ſame time admitting, that much would depend on the arrangement of the buſineſs, and until ſuch arrangement was made known, he conſidered every interference premature and untimely.

Mr.

Mr. P. BURROWES.—I oppoſe the previous queſtion. I ſupport my learned and reſpected friend—From deference to him, I abſtain at *preſent*, from ſubmitting a ſtronger propoſition to this Aſſembly. A Legiſlative Union with Great Britain upon *any terms*, which can be rationally conceived, is in its principle, at all times inadmiſſible; at the preſent juncture the meaſure is peculiarly pernicious. What is in truth and ſimplicity the Queſtion?—Whether the Iriſh nation ſhould at all deliberate upon the terms and conditions, upon which it ſhould ſurrender a Conſtitution founded upon the ſoundeſt principles of human policy, which it has enjoyed for ſix centuries, and under which with all its imperfections and abuſes, it arrived at a ſtate of great improvement, and was proceeding in a courſe of rapidly accelerating proſperity, until in common with other countries, the political malady, which has of late, afflicted the world, had viſited it with evils, *not aſcribable to its Conſtitution*.—I ſay this nation ought not to entertain ſuch a queſtion.—The diſcuſſion is certain degradation— The meaſure is certain ruin. We are told that the abſtract propoſition is harmleſs, and that every thing will depend upon the terms. I anſwer, that *every poſſible modification* of an Union neceſſarily involves evils, which cannot be compenſated in *any poſſible modification*.—Let us conſider the neceſſary actual ſacrifices and conſequences, and ſee whether there be even any ſpeculative equivalent. The total extinction of the Iriſh name and independent Iriſh Legiſlature is *a neceſſary preliminary*.—The merging of our Repreſentatives in an Aſſembly where they will be more than quadrupled, and where if they were unanimous, they could have but ſlight influence upon any ſubject, is a *neceſſary preliminary*. The perpetual exiſtence of the United Legiſlature in another country, to the influence of whoſe wiſhes and opinions they will

be ſubject, is *a neceſſary preliminary*. The encreaſe to an enormous extent of the principal evil which, for centuries, afflicted this country, namely, our abſentees, *is a certain conſequence*.—The encreaſe of taxes is *a certain conſequence*.—The encreaſe of our national debt is *a certain conſequence*.—And that we muſt depend upon the good faith and feeling of a nation which experience tells us has, or may conceive, ſhe has a rival intereſt, for the preſervation of any part of the ſyſtem which may benefit us, is *a certain conſequence*. Who is not ſtartled at this deficient catalogue of preliminary ſacrifice? Can any price warrant the ſurrender of the Conſtitution and liberties of a nation? and what then is the price offered? We are told of great commercial acquiſitions, or embarraſſing commercial difficulties from which we may be relieved by this arrangement. I do not believe, even if I admitted our Conſtitution to be a ſaleable commodity, that England has any commercial price to offer. As to foreign trade, we enjoy it already, except as far as it is locked up in companies, from whoſe monopoly an Union could not reſcue it. As to the channel trade, we labour under ſome diſadvantages, from which Government has promiſed to relieve us, which Parliament can eaſily ſettle and adjuſt, which are of but ſlight comparative conſequence, and which never can be a juſtifiable apology, for ſurrendering the ſource and ſecurity of all commerce, and of every thing elſe that is valuable—a national independent Legiſlature. Upon this head I will not dwell; it is too extenſive in its detail, and too ſlight in its comparative import to be diſcuſſed here.

I haſten to that which is the grand pretence for this alarming innovation. The ſecurity of the connection with Great Britain it is ſaid requires it.—This is indeed a powerful

powerful appeal—Connected as we are by ſo many ties to that great and powerful people, there are but few things w hich we ought not to ſacrifice to the preſervation of that connection. But let not our zeal miſlead us—Let us coolly inveſtigate the probable effect of this meaſure in that reſpect. I aſſert, I hope without contradiction, that the ſecurity of that connection muſt depend *upon affection, and not force.—Diſaffection* is the only ſource of ſeparation, and ſee whether, upon the whole, this meaſure be not more likely to extend than to reſtrain it. Conſider it in relation to the governing and governed bodies of this country.

Does any man ſeriouſly think our Parliament likely to endanger the connection by any thing hoſtile, or factious? Is it poſſible to add to their zeal for the intereſt of the empire? Perhaps that intereſt would be more ſoundly promoted, if they diſplayed more local attachment. At all events, the transfer of one hundred, probably of the ſame, men into the Britiſh Parliament will not tend to abate the motives to diſaffection amongſt the governed here, which is the prime conſideration, and to which I haſten. I cannot, however quit this head, without expreſſing my aſtoniſhment and indignation, that the very men who but yeſterday aſſerted that our Repreſentatives were pure and perfect; and who ſeemed to think that the higheſt character in the land, who ſhould aſperſe them, ſhould be treated as a rebel, and an outcaſt; that theſe very men ſhould themſelves now load them with the moſt unmeaſured calumnies—ſhould repreſent them as mean, mercenary, profligate and incorrigible.

I ſhall now conſider this ſubject, in reſpect of the governed body of Ireland, and the influence of this meaſure upon them.

them. The very lower orders of the people, I conſider as mere machines upon ſuch occaſions—There is, however, a middle order, in which the political energy, and actuating power of every free nation, reſides; and which by accident in this country, is ſo ſubdivided, as much to facilitate the preſent enquiry, the Yeomanry—the United Iriſhmen, and the Reformiſts, form I think an adequate diviſion of the political body of this country—at all events, ſufficiently accurate and adequate for fair practical inference. They comprehend all religions, and extend to all claſſes neceſſary to be conſidered.

Of the Yeomanry, who unqueſtionably preſerved the connection and the conſtitution, *which they had ſworn to defend*, I need not ſay much; I need not tell you, that loyalty to their Sovereign, and attachment to the conſtitution, ſo predominated in their minds, that all other ſentiments and conſiderations ſeemed to be totally diſcarded. Their loyalty could not admit of augmentation; but it may be forced to ſubſide, and I cannot conceive any thing ſo likely to affect them, as to loſe their Conſtitution at the very moment they have reſcued it from invaders, and placed it, as they conceived, out of the reach of danger. I confeſs, I have ſeen without wonder, a very conſiderable, and a very lamentable change, within a very ſhort time. Since this fatal queſtion has come forth, the moſt loyal men I know, enquire into the affairs of the empire, with feelings, perhaps, inſenſibly altered; they do not hear of a Britiſh victory with that ebullient joy, which indicated, even at a diſtance, the approach of glad tidings. Are men aware of the conſequences of ſetting ſpeculation looſe upon the probable ſtate of Ireland, in new and untried relations? I hope the Miniſter, who is ſuch an enemy

to

to innovation, has well weighed theſe conſequences. I come now to the United Iriſhmen—Surely no man thinks a cloſer connection with Great Britain will conciliate them. But, I beg pardon—I am in error—the United Iriſhmen, I am told, hold a jubilee of joy at this meaſure—they are its warmeſt advocates. They well know that their numbers will be increaſed, and their views promoted by it—they well know, that France will not require an embaſſador to communicate the ſtrength of her friends in this country, while ſuch a meaſure is diſcuſſing, or after it ſhall be carried—that France experimentally knows *how ſuch connections are formed, to what purpoſes they are ſubſervient, and by what means alone they can be preſerved.* I come now to the Reformiſts—They object, and I think truly object, that the influence of the Miniſter is too great, and the influence of the Nation too little in the Repreſentative body of the Nation—they will not, I think, conſider matters to be much mended, when the former becomes every thing, and the latter nothing—at preſent they prefer, at leaſt, the majority of them, prefer the preſent Conſtitution, even unreformed, to a revolution. If that Conſtitution be once *diſplaced*, 'tis difficult to know what Conſtitution they may wiſh to eſtabliſh in its room; but it is tolerably certain, that they being Iriſhmen, they will wiſh for an Iriſh Conſtitution. It ſhould be recollected, that I am now ſpeaking of Reformiſts, as contra-diſtinguiſhed to United Iriſhmen. Upon the whole of this head, I think, the attachment of the governing body to the connection cannot be increaſed, and that the attachment of every conſiderable portion of the governed, will be diminiſhed by this meaſure, and that conſequently it leads directly to diſaffection and ſeparation. Of the powerful effect which this terrific innovation will probably have upon

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the liberties of the Britiſh nation, and the balance of the Britiſh Conſtitution, I ſhall not here ſpeak; this conſideration will, I truſt, be maturely weighed by the people of another country.

But even though it were poſſible to deviſe a ſyſtem of Union, which ought to be adopted, this is a juncture the moſt unfit for propounding or diſcuſſing it. I am no metaphyſician in politics—I do not derive my opinions from mere abſtract reaſoning. Yet I hold it to be indiſputably certain, *that the antient eſtabliſhed Conſtitution of a nation, like this, cannot be juſtifiably annihilated, without the previous conſent of the nation, founded upon the freeſt and fulleſt diſcuſſion of the ſubject.*

That this meaſure will not be carried by fraud, or by force, I am fully convinced. The illuſtrious nobleman, who preſides here, and whom I am diſpoſed to contemplate as a miſſionary from Heaven, ſent to ſtop the effuſion of human blood, and the progreſs of human crimes, is my ſecurity. Whatever may be the views, or the wiſhes of a Britiſh Miniſter, he will not hazard his well-earned, and widely extended fame, by any act which will not bear the judgment of future ages.

If then, previous or even concomitant diſcuſſion be neceſſary, can it be now ſafely obtained?—Can it ever be credited than an Union carried now, was founded upon national conſent? And if the contrary opinion ſhould prevail, how fatal would the conſequence probably be? How various are the impediments to popular diſcuſſion at preſent? Do we forget that aſſemblies of the people, are under temporary reſtraints, at leaſt, regulations not heretofore deemed neceſſary in our Conſtitution; that the

the Habeas Corpus Act is ſuſpended; that extraordinary powers are veſted in magiſtrates; that that undefinable monſter Martial Law ſtill exiſts in parts of Ireland; that Rebellion is but juſt ſubdued, and Invaſion ſtill hovering around our coaſts; and above all, that a numerous Engliſh army exiſts in this country. To that army, I acknowledge myſelf, amongſt the reſt of my countrymen, to be deeply indebted, I attribute no bad deſigns to it. But I aſſert, that there cannot be a *free diſcuſſion* of the queſtion under ſuch circumſtances, and I add that if there could, *it ought not to be now provoked.* I ſay therefore, that this is not only an improper time, but the moſt improper time that could be deviſed for ſetting afloat ſo dangerous and inflammatory a topic; and I am aſtoniſhed that any man could be ſo raſh and daring to caſt ſuch a firebrand into a country ſo combuſtible. In oppoſing the introduction of this meaſure, I feel that I am contending for peace and tranquillity, as well as freedom. I confeſs, I feel a ſentiment of national pride, and perhaps, national prejudice in favour of the liberties of Ireland, of which I am not aſhamed. Perhaps theſe emotions may ſomewhat influence my judgment; if they do, I am unconſcious of it, becauſe I feel a rational conviction upon the ſubject. I ſhould not, however, much regret it, if it were the caſe; becauſe I am perſuaded that even a prejudice in favour of the Conſtitution of one's country is one of the beſt cements of human ſociety. Condemning as I do the principle of an Union, I give the previous queſtion my decided oppoſition.

Mr. BARNES.—Father Smith, to uſe the words of a great man, (Mr. GRATTAN,) the gentleman who ſpoke laſt but one, "is an Engliſhman, contending for the power of his country, while I am defending the liberty of

 mine."

mine." He then ſpoke with conſiderable ability againſt a Union with Great Britain on any terms. Indeed what availed terms, however liberal, when if thoſe were acceded to by Ireland, there remained no means of enforcing the performance of them? To ſhew that terms propoſed by Great Britain as the price of an Union, could not be depended on, he adverted to what followed in the Britiſh Parliament a very few years after the Union with Scotland—a tax on malt in Scotland was propoſed by the Miniſter of the day, and though it was oppoſed by every Scotch Repreſentative and Scotch Peer in either Houſe, it was carried in direct breach of one of the articles of the Union. Nor was this the only inſtance of violated faith —another occurred a few years back reſpecting the rights of the Scotch Peers ſitting in the Britiſh Houſe of Lords —where a caſe was decided by the Britiſh Parliament in manifeſt contravention of one of the leading articles of the Union. This caſe is the more worthy the attention of Iriſhmen generally, on account of the particular circumſtances attending it, and which you will allow me to detail a little at large. At the time of the Union, the Scotiſh Peers propoſed, that a clauſe ſhould be inſerted to guard them againſt the injury which they had ſuſtained by the laſt determination of the Houſe of Lords; they were entreated not to preſs it, and to ſuffer it to be determined by the Houſe of Lords, whenever the queſtion ſhould ariſe; they ſubmitted, but by the propoſal, they manifeſted their fears, and proclaimed their wiſhes. The Lords did not diſappoint them, and in the year 1708-9, their Lordſhips reſolved, as the Scotch Peers wiſhed, that a Scottiſh Peer becoming a Peer of Great Britain, ceaſed to have any intereſt in the Scottiſh Peerage. In 1787, they determined the ſame point, and thereby turned the oppoſers of Mr. Pitt out of the repreſentation.

ſentation. In 1793, a contrary determination anſwered the ſame purpoſe, and overturned the law, as ſettled immediately after the Union. Such is the confidence Ireland ſhould place in any terms propoſed by Great Britain; he conſidered it as an inſolent diſplay of her ſuperiority, that Great Britain ſhould propoſe a Union at ſuch a time as this; it was a meaſure dictated by her confidence in that proud ſuperiority with which her fleets ruled the ocean —but ſhe ſhould remember that that ſuperiority would be of ſhort duration, were it not for the force which Ireland afforded to man thoſe fleets—to his own knowledge, and he had been himſelf a ſeaman, half the ſtrength of the navy of England, including the marine corps, was drawn from Ireland; and yet Engliſh Captains have had the inſolence to ſay, that in their ſhips, they would have no more Iriſhmen than main-maſts! Such was the contumely with which Ireland and Iriſhmen had always been treated by England—but he contended that Great Britain had nothing to give Ireland, which could be conſidered as a compenſation for the ſurrender of its independence.—To all the world except the Eaſt Indies we already had a right to trade—and a Union would not give us more of the Eaſt-India trade than we already poſſeſſed—for we could in that caſe, as well as now, only be permitted to ſhare in it by individual merchants becoming the proprietors of Eaſt-India ſtock; and as to morals and melioration of manners, he ridiculed the idea of thoſe reſulting from new importations of vice from Portſmouth and Plymouth, or from Duke-ſtreet, St. James's. While we had a Kirwan in the Pulpit, and a Saurin at the Bar, we wanted no empyrics in Law or Divinity.

One word he would ſay, on the pamphlet, entitled "Arguments for and againſt an Union." There was a

time, in the hiſtory of this country, and that within his knowledge, when an Attorney General would not have thought he diſcharged his duty to the country, unleſs he had indicted the author of it for high treaſon; unleſs the patriotiſm of the Houſe of Commons had preferred an impeachment, as a mode of puniſhment more ſuited to the variegated crimes with which it abounds. With reſpect to the *right* of Parliament to agree to an Union, he declared it to be his opinion they could have no ſuch right.

He read the following reſolution, agreed to unanimouſly by the Bar of Ireland, in 1782.

"*At a full Meeting of the Lawyers' Corps, the 28th of February, 1782, purſuant to notice.*

Colonel Edward Weſtby in the Chair.

The following reſolution was unanimouſly agreed to.

"*Reſolved, That the Members of the Houſe of Commons are the repreſentatives of, and derive their power ſolely from the people, and that a denial of this propoſition by them, would be, to abdicate the repreſentation.*"

And then ſaid, Father Smith, let this learned meeting remember the diſtinguiſhed characters that ornamented the Iriſh Bar of that day; let them remember, that the late Chief Baron Huſſey Burgh, and the preſent Chief Baron Lord Yelverton, were among the foremoſt leaders of the patriotic band; that the majority, if not all the preſent Judges of Ireland, were members of that corps, and that therefore the People of this country, had the character and authority of the preſent Bench of Ireland, for the truth of the propoſition, contained in the reſolution

lution he had had the honour to read. He would likewiſe ſay, that the Grand Juries throughout the kingdom, and the two Houſes of Parliament, had declared that no power on earth, had a right to *make* laws to *bind* Ireland, but the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland, and to no other power would he yield obedience: It was his right as an Iriſhman to be governed by thoſe only, and bred as he was to the uſe of arms, he would not tamely ſurrender that right to the cunning or the inſolence of that ſerpent and political apoſtate, Mr. Pitt.

Mr. T. GRADY.—I am happy to perceive, Sir, that my learned friend, who originated this diſcuſſion, has, upon conſideration, thought proper to withdraw *ths plea in bar*, he heretofore put in to the *bill* for an Union, and that he now contents himſelf with the *dilatory* meaſure of a *ſpecial demurrer*; and my friend who leads the oppoſition, ſeems not to differ much with him in principle, inaſmuch as his object is to transfer the argument to the *adjourned liſt*, in hopes that the parties may compromiſe, before the queſtion can obtain a final deciſion.

I feel, Sir, that the part I ſhall take upon this occaſion, may be attributed to thoſe motives that in general are ſuppoſed to influence men who have any dependence upon Government; but thoſe who *know me*, know how lightly I eſtimate *my* dependence; and thoſe who do not know me may, before I ſit down, be induced to think that my conduct is only influenced by the ſettled conviction of an independent mind.

Sir, I not only approve of, but I ſolicit an Union; I mean an Union upon equitable terms. The learned member

member has talked of tranſmitting our valuable Conſtitution to poſterity; and if I had any reaſon to think that the country conſidered that Conſtitution a ſecurity, that they looked upon it with reſpect, or even with patience, I would become a party to the deed by which it was to be indefeaſibly tranſmitted to future generations. But I acknowledge to the world, that I am weary of a ſyſtem which, except its expence, has been of late nothing but a ſource of perpetual conflict, and civil hoſtilities. What moderate man is not diſguſted at having ſeen the convulſions by which this unhappy country has been ſo long ſhaken, and which have been induced by that ſyſtem! The peaſantry arrayed againſt the gentry, the gentry againſt the peaſantry, and the phyſical force of the nation, drawn up in line of battle againſt its conſtituted authorities; demands, on the one hand, alledged to be unreaſonable and turbulent; rejections, on the other, alledged to be unconſtitutional and oppreſſive; the People, on the one ſide, charged with being a maſs of bigotry and republicaniſm; the Parliament, on the other, reviled as not being the Parliament of the People, nor the Parliament of the Sovereign, but the Parliament of an arrogant ariſtocracy, who, while they held the Sovereign in ſhackles, trampled upon his People.

We have ſeen the natural effects of ſuch a ſyſtem. Demands leading to rejection, rejection to recrimination, recrimination to chaſtiſement, chaſtiſement to rebellion, and rebellion to extermination. Is this the ſyſtem that I am called upon to tranſmit as a bleſſing to poſterity? Shall I viſit poſterity with a ſyſtem, in whoſe train are carried war, peſtilence, and famine? No; GIVE ME AN UNION. Unite me to that country, where

where all is peace, order, and proſperity; and give me, in that Union, the unſhackled councils of a nation, where no prejudice arrogates to dominate, no local intereſts to controul, and whoſe councils have, at this important criſis in the hiſtory of the world, raiſed her head above all the nations of the Univerſe! Such an Union, we underſtand, is now offered by the Miniſter of our Sovereign. The People, defeated in their hopes of Reform, colleague for this purpoſe with the Sovereign, and you are going to colleague with the ariſtocracy, both againſt Sovereign and People; but you have not even the ſtrength of an integral eſtate for your colleagues. A great proportion, conſiſting of the wiſeſt perſonages, nay the heads of that reſpectable body, are ſaid to favour the views of the Sovereign; you, therefore, have for your colleagues only the rump of the ariſtocracy. But what advantage do you propoſe to yourſelves as a body, or what credit with the country, from an interference, where your motives, to ſay the beſt, muſt be doubtful, and where your interpoſition (to ſay the leaſt) muſt be ineffectual? The People could ſee no middle term between Parliamentary Reform and Parliamentary annihilation. When they aſked for Reform, you refuſed your aſſiſtance; and now, when they aſk for annihilation, you interpoſe to prevent the extinction of that ſyſtem which you then refuſed to redreſs. You then protected yourſelves by the argument, that it was no time to diſturb the public mind, by agitating the queſtion; and now, when even upon your own admiſſion, the embers of one rebellion are not yet cold, and while there is another ſuppoſed to be kindling in the country, you proceed without remorſe, to the diſcuſſion. But the People will not think you inconſiſtent.

Parliamentary

Parliamentary Reform, they ſay, would be to you Parliamentary annihilation; and excluſion would be the conſequence of either extreme. But of what *general* advantage can the continuance of this ſyſtem be to the profeſſion? Though it be not the caſe in the inſtance of any living Barriſter, yet we all know enough of the hiſtory of the profeſſion, to believe that the Bar patronage, the due reward of genius and of learning, has too often been laviſhed upon Parliamentary ſycophants, at the expence of talents and perſeverance.

Many of my brethren who are now around me, and who perhaps will vote againſt me on this queſtion, have frequently lamented to me, in an exaggerated picture which I could never ſubſcribe to, that during the exiſtence of former Parliaments, they thought the profeſſion degraded in the perſons of ſome men, who ſtood forward upon the floor, with a piſtol in one hand and a bludgeon in the other, cuffing down all the talents of the land; making their way to honours and emoluments, by impudence and ſervility. I therefore call upon all my brethren, who feel within themſelves the impulſe of genius, and the energy of learning, to vote for the extinction of a ſyſtem that ſacrificed the fair trader to the ſmuggler.

Believe me, Sir, if the people feel that your motives are merely ſelfiſh, they will not be touched with any ſenſe of your ſufferings in loſing the channel of Parliamentary preferment, nor will they make any common cauſe with you on the occaſion. But what effect will your opinion have with Government? If it has any effect, it will be by leaning againſt the impreſſion to give it a bias

bias the contrary way. If you have a right to dictate in this inſtance, you will have a right to dictate in every other, and then it will come to this, that as often as any State meaſure is in agitation, the Miniſter muſt ſend his compliments to Father Smith to beg he would convene the Bar in order to take, what the learned mover has very ſophiſtically called their *legal* opinion. And then the leading council of the State will be a body of Barriſters erected into a ſynod, of Attorney's-General in perſpective, embryo Chief Judges, and animalcule Serjeants. But ſuffer me to aſk that learned member what is to become of his *legal* opinion, if the *phyſical* opinion of the State be againſt him? All the cities of the South and Weſt are from commercial motives ſtrongly ſolicitous of an union. Situated as thoſe cities are upon the great Atlantick, on the weſtern extremity of the empire, between almoſt all the reſt of the world and Great Britain, they know that they muſt become the ſtore-houſes of the empire; and the relative effect of this upon the landed intereſt in thoſe parts makes *that* intereſt equally ſolicitous. But the great body of the people are the Catholics, and they deſire it. (Here there was a violent outcry of no, no.)

I deſire to be underſtood, as only ſpeaking from my authority of the Catholics of the South with ſome of the moſt reſpectable of whom I have the cloſeſt connections, and I can ſay, that *they* conſider an Union, independent of its general advantage to the State, as the only meaſure by which, to bury in eternal oblivion, the dreadful conflict that has been ſo unfortunately revived at the end of a century between Proteſtant and Catholic, or as the parties are now invidiouſly diſtinguiſhed, between Orangery and Popery. But abſtracted from this autho-

rity, I think I have a right to argue what will be the probable opinion of the Catholics of Ireland when they come to decide upon the queſtion. There are but two fair ways of anticipating the opinions and the actions of men, namely, from their intereſts or from their paſſions; but when their paſſions and their intereſts go hand in hand, the grounds of anticipation are irreſiſtible.

As to the intereſt of the Catholics, the trade of the b: ing principally in their hands, and the effect of this meaſure upon the trade being unqueſtionable, they will certainly be urged by the impulſe of intereſt. But ſuppoſe ſome of the upper claſſes were to be deluded into an unnatural league with their inherent enemies, what would that weigh with the body againſt the intereſt of the peaſantry, who form the ſtrength of the country, and to whom this meaſure comes recommended by the great bounty of a tythe modification. Will *they* heſitate upon the ſubject: I believe, at leaſt I may venture to anſwer for *them*. And indeed, I believe they would take upon truſt any meaſure that came recommended from the nobleman, who now preſides in this country, and who has already covered them with the ſhield of his protection. But in ſuch a body there muſt be many who will reaſon from their paſſions. And in ſuch a criſis, as the preſent, the *man* frequently predominates over the *metaphyſician*. *They* will ſay, "For a century we lay like a morbed "maſs upon the ſurface of the ſoil, without the capa- "city of enriching the country we encumbered. Whe- "ther by our friends or whether by our enemies, we were "then brought into political exerciſe, and in the con- "flict acquired conſiderable advantages. Their, how- "ever, we were not ſuffered to reſt, but in the effort "to toſs us ſtill forward we have barely eſcaped being

"as

" remitted to the non-entity of our anceſtors. We have
" as yet eſcaped, but we have been denounced.—And if
" the preſent ſyſtem holds, we muſt expect the reſult
" of that denunciation. High and low, north and ſouth,
" from the channel to the occean we have been branded
" as rebels. The Rebellion was called the cruſade of
" Popery, and that at a time when if we wanted to in-
" ſtall the Pope we ſhould not have known where to find
" him."

Theſe are arguments which the Catholic will not be offended with me for ſuppoſing in his behalf, for they are arguments which, if I were a Catholic myſelf, I ſhould be very apt to uſe, and that too whether intereſt or paſſion was predominant,

In ſhort, Sir, it comes to this—Whether will they coaleſce with their *friend* or with their enemies. In their Sovereign they will recognize their ſteady their perſevering friend. Their enemies are diſtinguiſhed *by their badges*. You ſee then, Sir, there is a great body of the people not likely to ſympathiſe with us. And inaſmuch therefore as the propoſed reſolution would probably be ineffectual, I ſhall vote for the adjournment.

Before I ſit down, I muſt ſay that I am not capable of even hinting diſreſpect towards my learned and much valued friend who originated this queſtion. I know, and the public knows, that he is as much above the principle as the neceſſity of a ſelfiſh motive. I know, and the public knows, that he was offered one of the firſt law offices of the State, an offer as honourable to Government as to him. Without Parliamentary ſervice, or Parliamentary connection, they caſt their eyes upon the

Bar, and in ſelecting him, they only engrafted their own opinion upon the opinion of the profeſſion and of the publick. Sir, I ſhall trouble you no further.

Mr. JOHN BERESFORD, Jun. I riſe to obſerve, that I do not ſee how the object of the Meeting can be promoted, by coarſe and violent invective upon the Miniſter and people of England. I think, the introducing upon the tapis the characters of great men, (who are not preſent to defend themſelves), for the purpoſe of reflecting upon, and of reviling them, is as irrelevant to the ſubject under conſideration, as it is uncandid. To offer inſult, where reſentment is precluded, I do not think characteriſtic of generoſity or of decorum. It was not my intention to have obtruded my ſentiments upon this aſſembly; but as they ſeem inclined to indulge me with a hearing, I will ſtate my reaſons for diſſenting from the reſolution, and voting for the adjournment. The learned mover ſeems to admit, that conviction may ſtill flaſh upon his mind the propriety of an Union. I am not ſurprized at this—for I am not aware how any deciſive opinion can yet be formed upon the queſtion, in its preſent ſtate of embryo and imperfection. I do not ſee how rational conviction can be obtained, until the arguments of all parties ſhall be adduced. I deprecate the diſcuſſion of it, therefore, as premature and improper, until it ſhall be ſubmitted to the public, by that authority which alone is competent to ſpecify the objects, and develope the plan of ſo complicated a meaſure; and I ſtill more deprecate, gentlemen pledging themſelves by reſolutions to any opinion upon a ſubject which is, as yet, unpropoſed, undetailed, and conſequently but imperfectly underſtood. It is the peculiar feature, and characteriſtic of the members of the

profeſſion

profeſſion to which I have the honor to belong, to arrive at the attainment of truth, by minute and patient inveſtigation; I ſhould be ſorry, indeed, they were in this inſtance, to deviate from that line of conduct, ſo juſt, ſo honourable, and ſo liberal. I ſhould be ſorry they were to affect to decide upon any queſtion, much leſs, upon one of ſuch vaſt importance, without documents or materials, upon which a fair or rational concluſion can be grounded; ſuch a proceeding would be as diſgraceful as it would be novel. But, I hope, I truſt, I anxiouſly expect, that the good ſenſe and good conduct of the Bar, on this day, will not ſuffer ſuch an imputation to attach upon their profeſſion. There is an argument which weighs with me, and makes me peculiarly anxious that the Bar ſhould not commit themſelves, by any ſudden or precipitate determination, relative to a Legiſlative Union between this country and Great Britain, which, as yet, has not been propounded, and the terms of which have certainly not been explained; (and I appeal to the feelings of every man preſent, whether there is any colour for delicacy upon the occaſion), that it is generally thought, that if a conſolidation of the Legiſlatures of the two countries, was ever ſo advantageous to the empire in general, or to Ireland in particular, ſtill the members of the aſſembly, which I have the honor to addreſs, muſt ſuffer, in point of profeſſional intereſt and political conſequence, inaſmuch as one of the channels to conſideration, to honor, and to preferment, will, in this country, be for ever cloſed, upon this queſtion; I did not mean to give my opinion, much leſs to decide; but I confeſs I fear their taking the lead in diſcountenancing even the entertaining or deliberating upon the meaſure; their pronouncing a ſweeping condemnation upon the illegality of

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a Legiſlative incorporation, and rejecting the preſent moment as improper for temperate diſcuſſion, might ſanction the ſuſpicion, and give colour to the charge of their being influenced by narrow and ſelfiſh views, inſtead of ſtanding upon the broad and generous baſis of public utility, and national advantage I entreat you will not haſtily commit yourſelves, I entreat you not to act, as if you wiſhed to carry by clamour and by tumult, that which it is the province of cool and deliberate reaſon to decide upon. I aſſert, that this reſolution, if carried, will look like an attempt to overawe the parliament, and to deter the Legiſlatures of the two countries, not from finally determining upon, but even from deliberating upon a queſtion of national importance. Depend upon it, too, the attempt, if ſuch a one could be in contemplation, would be futile and unavailing; and I hope it would be ſo, for if it were not, the Parliament would be feeble, puſillanimous, and inadequate to the end of its inſtitution. I again entreat you to wait until you have ſome materials to ground your reaſoning and reſolutions upon; I do not make this requeſt as an advocate for or againſt the meaſure of an Union. Upon that great and momentous queſtion, I have not yet formed an opinion, becauſe it is yet in darkneſs. The objections which gentlemen have made, if well founded, will loſe none of their force, by their patiently waiting a detail of the plan in contemplation; t heir mouths will not be cloſed by ſuch temperate and dignified demeanour. They will ſtill retain the privilege of expreſſing their ſentiments, and that with tenfold weight and authority. It is unlike the miniſter, to bring a meaſure by ſurpriſe upon the people, therefore, I am ſure ſufficient time will be given to diſcuſs and balance the expediency or inxpediency of ſuch a connection. It is unlike the Engliſh

liſh people to whom we are under ſuch obligations for the prompt, generous, and effectual aſſiſtance they ſo nobly afforded us, to force a Union, if unpallatable upon us; and it is impoſſible that a queſtion of ſo great magnitude, comprehending ſuch a variety of intereſts and of ſuch infinite bearings ſhould be ſo hurried or huſtled through the Legiſlatures of Great Britain and Ireland, as to preclude the public ſentiment from being clearly aſcertained, and expreſſed theron. Beware of being deluded by declamation, and miſled by a ſemblance of zeal and patriotic ardour, ſometimes aſſumed to acquire popularity, or to cover worſe intentions. He is not moſt his country's friend, who talks the moſt of the liberties of the people. If, upon fair, diſpaſſionate, and ſober diſcuſſion, a Union ſhould appear pregnant with miſchief, and national diſadvantage, reject it. Your voice, as that of a reſpectable portion of the community, muſt always be attended to, and if that of the nation, will be obeyed. It will then be the voice of reaſon, of patriotiſm, and of juſt conviction; and not that of tumult, of faction, of intemperance, or of ſelf-intereſt.

Mr. LLOYD vindicated the Catholics from the charge of their deſiring an Union with Great Britain. He contended that the Catholics were not friendly to an Union, and aſſerted he had as ample means of knowing their ſenſentiments as the learned gentleman (Mr. GRADY). It was a ſlander on the great body of the Catholics, to deſcribe them as actuated by ſo baſe and malignant a principle, as that of wiſhing to pull down the Proteſtants, becauſe they could not riſe to their level. But if the Catholics were actuated by ſo impolitic a motive, I am confident the Proteſtant men would be able to maintain their rights in ſpite of their oppoſition. I am convinced, however, the Catholics could not entertain any ſuch ſentiments

ment—They had already obtained in the courſe of a few years a variety of important privileges, and there could be no reaſonable doubt, but they muſt in a very few years more, obtain the only remaining object which they had to ſeek—They could not therefore be ſo abſurd as to give up tamely and willingly the advantages they had obtained, and the certain proſpect of attaining thoſe which they fairly purſued. He reaſoned at length, and with great energy, on the impolicy of urging a Union at a time when the paſſions of the public were in ſo irritable a ſtate, and on the injuſtice of propoſing it at a period when a great military force, and martial law, prevented the people from delivering their ſentiments on a queſtion of ſuch great national importance.

Mr. Driscoll.—Sir, it is very idle in gentlemen to preface their ſpeeches with eulogiums on the independence of their minds, and the purity of their motives, becauſe the nature of the mind and of the motive is beſt underſtood by the conduct and ſentiments of the man: if the motive be pure, it will here receive full credit; if not, no ſplendid preface can ſhield it from detection in the enlightened aſſembly, in which I have the honour to be heard. I feel the preſent a very awful moment, and I am ſtrongly of opinion that upon your deciſion this day will, in a great meaſure, depend the ſafety of my country, or the ſeparation of it from England, which is equivalent to its deſtruction. I riſe to ſupport the original motion from a ſincere deſire to exſtinguiſh the hopes of conſpirators and traitors who have brought their country to the brink of ruin—Hopes, which are revived at the chearing proſpect of the convulſion which is likely to agitate the public mind, if the great queſtion of a Union ſhall be introduced in the preſent ſtate of the nation. The power of the rebels is cruſhed, but their principles are not ſubdued.

dued. I am bound by my duty as a ſubject, and by a ſolemn oath which I have taken, faithfully to maintain and ſupport the laws and Conſtitution of this kingdom; and I will vote moſt zealouſly againſt the introduction of a queſtion, the diſcuſſion of which in the preſent diſtracted ſtate of the country would, in my mind, bring the laws and that Conſtitution into imminent danger, by encouraging Rebellion to rear its head again with encreaſed and ferocious confidence. As to the political advantages or diſadvantages likely to accrue to this kingdom from a Union of our Legiſlature with that of England, I am incompetent to decide: The diſcuſſion of it is premature, and wide of the queſtion now before you, which conſiſts of two propoſitions; firſt, that a Union would be an innovation, and ſecondly, that it would be highly imprudent and improper to propoſe it at the preſent juncture (Here a loud cry of no, no, by thoſe who oppoſed the motion, who ſaid that the queſtion then before the meeting was that of *adjournment.)* I am aſhamed, Sir, to hear in this aſſembly ſuch vociferation, and upon a ground ſo unworthy of notice. I have truly ſtated the original queſtion, the adjournment of which I oppoſe. I did not conceive that any gentleman would be ſilly enough to inſult the feelings of this meeting, by an attempt to trammel their ſentiments upon ſo awful an occaſion, through the means of miſerable etiquettes and dexterities, the feeble inſtruments of faction, which ſhould be left where they were found, of which I hope I ſhall hear no more this night, and which if I do, I ſhall treat with the indifference they merit. I have ſtated the two propoſitions contained in the queſtion. No gentleman has yet denied the firſt; and one feeble attempt only has been made in oppoſition to the ſecond: An attempt has indeed, been

made as it were to abſorb the firſt propoſition, by a bold poſition of blameable extent, and moſt unneceſſary introduction. It has been aſſerted, "that the Parliament of "Ireland has by the Conſtitution a power to form ſuch "a Union independent of, and uncontrouled by, the "ſenſe of the people of this kingdom." I ſhall deny that doctrine to the laſt moment of my life. The common principle of reaſon and juſtice deny the power contended for; the three great branches of our Conſtitution are, are the eſtates of the people of Ireland—The exiſting members of all of them, are the truſtees and agents of the nation. Upon the diſſolution of the Parliament, the great reverſionary right of the people comes into poſſeſſion, and they excerciſe their right, as well by their Sovereign, as by themſelves, in creating a new truſt; but they do not abſolutely transfer the ſoil. They delegate the ſtupendous power of making laws to affect their lives, liberty, and property. But when the term of the truſt, as eſtabliſhed by law, expires; the people have a right to demand, imperiouſly to demand, a reſtoration of their eſtate and the actual exerciſe of the actual exerciſe of their power to commit it to the hands of new truſtees, either to increaſe its improvement, or to infuſe new ſtrength into any parts of it which might have been impoveriſhed by the outgoing occupiers. Upon this principle I am ſupported by high authorities, unneceſſary to be cited to this learned aſſembly. If a Union ſhall be effected with England in purſuance of the conſent of the majority of the thinking part of the nation fairly taken when the nation can think, I ſhall hold it to be my bounden duty to ſubmit, and to act under it. But if the ſeparate right of Legiſlation for Ireland, ſhall be annihilated or transfered, or incorporated with that of any other country without

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ſuch conſent of the nation, I cannot conceive myſelf juſtly bound by any ſuch tranſaction.

Gentlemen have complained of the animation which has appeared this night, in diſcuſſing the queſtion before you. They have deprecated raſhneſs of deciſion, and entreated you to allow a month for *ſaber* diſcuſſion, as the only means of enabling you to form a correct judgment. I meet thoſe gentlemen upon their own ground; and if they are alarmed at what they call intemperance in the minds of the gentlemen around me, enlightened by education, and chaſtened by habit and deep reflection, and *that* upon a queſtion which only expreſſes our terror at the approach of the grand meaſure of a Union, what frightful tumult muſt they not expect in the great maſs of the public mind, when the mighty propoſal itſelf comes forward, and provokes the agitation at ſuch a period as the preſent! It is in vain, Sir, to diſſemble: Thoſe gentlemen muſt know that in the preſent convulſed ſtate of this country, there is no claſs of men who are in a ſtate of mind to give the ſober conſideration they are ſo fond of, to the meaſure of a Union. Will they ſeek ſobriety of diſcuſſion, among the agonies of diſappointed treaſon? Will they look for it, in the exaſperated reſentment of loyaliſts, whoſe kindred are murdered, and whoſe property has been plundered? Will they reſort to the huſband of an abuſed wife, or the father of a violated daughter, for ſobriety of reaſoning? Is it from the ſanguinary conflicts of religious bigotry, almoſt unequalled in the annals of hiſtory, that they ſee ſobriety of thought likely to iſſue? Are the minds of affrighted townſmen, and of panic-ſtruck country gentlemen, fitted for the ſober diſcuſſion of a

queſtion, involving the irrevocable doom of their country? No, Sir; the promoters of this meaſure, going at leaſt to a radical change of our mode of Legiſlation, and to the abſolute removal of our ſeperate Parliament, know in their hearts that the ſenſe of the nation cannot, by poſſibility, be taken in the preſent ſtate of this bleeding, unhappy country; and therefore if a queſtion of ſuch vaſt moment ſhall be brought forward in ſuch a a ſituation of the kingdom, I cannot view it in any other light, than a deliberate reſolution to carry the meaſure either by force or fraud. But, Sir, in recommendation of a Union, I am aſtoniſhed to hear moſt extraordinary topics reſorted to. You are told that his Majeſty and the diſaffected part of our people are united in their wiſhes for the meaſure. We are adviſed to betake ourſelves to a Union, as our only refuge from the want of integrity in our own Parliament and in the Government of the country. Sir, I cannot liſten to ſo ſcandalous a libel upon my Sovereign, without reprobating the imputation. It is not in his exalted nature, to form any ſort of communion with diſappointed traitors; nor can I hear without indignation, any aſperſion upon our Parliament, or the Adminiſtration of Ireland, becauſe I am clear that the obvious effect of it is, to pamper the malignity, and to realize the pretences of the horrible conſpiracy from which the nation has ſo lately, and ſo narrowly eſcaped.

Without any weight from property, influence or connection, I conſider myſelf as having as dear, and as highly valued pledges in this country, as any other man in it without exception. As a profeſſional man, my very exiſtence depends upon the ſtability of the ſtate,

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and the favour of my countrymen. What impreſſion my ſentiments may make upon you, I cannot preſume to ſay; but I have given them to you ſincerely. I think I ſee a cloud riſing above our horizon, more livid, more fraught with deſolation, than appeared at any time during the late rebellion. But I will not deſpair:- The effuſions of manly ſenſe and ſpirit, which I have this night witneſſed in this numerous and moſt reſpectable aſſembly, have greatly animated my hope, that your deciſion will operate as a ſalutary conductor, in diverting the deathful fire from the boſom of your country.

Mr. GOOLD.—Before I entered this room, my mind was made up, not only on the original motion now under conſideration, but on the abſtract queſtion of an incorporating Union between Great Britain and Ireland. I had determined, that on the original reſolution propoſed by my honourable and much reſpected friend, I would not ſay a word; hoping as I did that a propoſition ſo temperate in its conſtruction, and ſo reaſonable in its object, would have paſſed this Aſſembly with out oppoſition; that it would have been received with acclamation, without the neceſſity of diſcuſſion. I have been diſappointed—It has already undergone, and is undergoing diſcuſſion: in its outſet it has met with determined oppoſition.

Nor has my diſappointment been the leſs bitter, when I conſider, that that very oppoſition has proceeded from a quarter of much weight and reſpectability among us; of much value on the ſcore of affection and gratitude, in the hiſtory of *Iriſh* affairs. I am, I ſay, Sir, deeply affected, when I conſider the melancholy inſtability of human

human conduct; the extraordinary and unaccountable revolutions of the human mind. Is it not then lamentable to think, that a name which Ireland never can forget, whose exertions in her favour, Ireland never can repay, that name, which in the year 1782, by an happy and successful combination of ardent sincerity, and gigantic intellect, went no small way in contributing to atchieve the independence of this country, should in the year 1798 be the *first* to surrender *that* independence? Is it not a source of sorrow and indignation, that a name which in the year 1782 would have fought and died for the liberties and constitution of *Ireland*, should in the year 1798 be the *first* to sacrifice both, not to the wants, or convenience of Great Britain, but to the profligate and interested plans of an artful and designing Minister?

By what fatality has it happened, by what process of the human understanding, is it to be accounted for, that the same hand that once held the shield, should now hold the dagger; that, *that* constitution which was once the object of anxious care and protection, should now become the inviting object of hostility and murder. I have said before, that Ireland never *could*, I say it now, Ireland never *can* forget *this name*.

In the midst of these melancholy observations, there is not wanting unto me much of pride and consolation. Perhaps the history of any country in Europe never exhibited to the eyes or understanding of men, a more awful, interesting, and dignified spectacle, than *that* before me; and it is not with hope, but with confidence I say, that the result of this day will justify the observation of an eloquent writer; "That an additional fold in the shield of liberty, is an *independent Bar*." Perhaps the history of

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no country on earth ever recorded a moment, which under all its circumſtances, created a ſtronger intereſt than this. The Iriſh Bar, that great proportion of the thinking maſs of this country, are aſſembled on the Lord's day, (a day which our children may yet look for in the calendar, with emotions of augmented piety and veneration) not for the purpoſe of factious debate, but for the more glorious and important end, of national dignity, and national peace; and as they have but recently contributed to ſave the Monarchy from the encroachments of a populace, ſo it is my fervent prayer to the Almighty, that they may be able to ſave from the deſigns of avarice or ambition, the freedom and laws, and pride, and dignity, and conſtitution, of a great but unfortunate people.

But you have been moved to adjourn your meeting until this day month. Under the ſpecious pretext of more mature conſideration, I think I can diſcover the certain operation of political cunning. You have been told by a gentleman, bearing a name of no ſmall authority and power, and influence in this country, that a debate ſo lightly conſidered, and ſo quick in its determination, may be liable to be miſrepreſented. I agree with that learned gentleman; I ſtood not in need of his atteſtation, to know that we may be, as we have hitherto been, libelled. I know it to demonſtration, that we have not been able to preſerve the debate, and reſult of our meeting a few days ſince, from falſe and wicked miſrepreſentation. I know that one of the ableſt and moſt virtuous men in this kingdom was groſsly libelled in one of the daily papers. Let it not be told me that there are but *one* ſet of prints, that have contributed to our late misfortunes—I tell you, Sir, that if one writer can ſeduce, another may goad a people into rebellion. I hold thoſe in *pari delicto*, who

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dare to libel the Government, and thoſe who dare to libel the People. I hold thoſe equally culpable, who ſhall dare to miſrepreſent the Prince to the People, and thoſe who ſhall dare to miſrepreſent the People to the Prince. I hold it equally deteſtable, to repreſent the Prince to the People, as a tyrant, and the People to the Prince, as fit only to be ſlaves.

Alas! to what incalculable hazards and danger, are they willing to expoſe all that is dear to Iriſhmen, who ſpeak to me of an incorporating Union between Great Britain and Ireland. In vain ſhall they urge to me, as has been done this day, the inviting (and as they call it) tempting advantages, that in a commercial detail, may be gained by it. On a great conſtitutional queſtion, my mind recoils from the ſtupid and unfeeling work of calculation. On a great conſtitutional queſtion, my mind diſdains to be governed by the rules of vulgar arithmetic. He is the libeller of my underſtanding; he is the violator of my beſt and fineſt feelings, who dares to tell me, that he can give me an *equivalent* for independence, and a *bargain* for the conſtitution; and ſhall endeavour to prove it to me, by the rule of three direct. When was it ever heard of, that the free conſtitution of a great People, was a marketable commodity? When was it ever heard of, that the independence of a great nation, formed an article in the ſchedule of her export or import trade? When was it ever heard of, that national feeling, and pride, and dignity, could be aſcertained, by the application of geometry, or numerical calculation?

I ſay, then, that on this great, awful, and tremendous ſubject, I will not treat with the Britiſh Miniſter, or the Britiſh Merchant, with his pen in one hand, and his Ledger

Ledger in the other—or if I do treat with him, I ſhall treat with him on grounds, on which he never can come up to my price. He may open to *me*, *his Ledger*—I ſhall open to *him*, the great volume of human nature. He may read for *me*, his ſtring of entries, and calculations—I ſhall read for *him*, the inexhauſtible detail of my juſt and honourable feelings. He may offer to tempt *me*, by his ſyſtem of commerce—I ſhall reſiſt the temptation, with the whole ſyſtem of national feeling, national pride, dignity, affection, and prejudice.

I repeat it—my mind is made up, on the abſtract queſtion of an incorporating Union, between this kingdom and Great Britain. Encumber it, as you pleaſe, with the whole detail of commercial advantages, I will not have it. I tell you, Sir, if this Union ſhould take place, and that the Britiſh and Iriſh intereſts ſhould ever claſh, it is not poſſible that the Britiſh Miniſter can be the beſt judge, or guardian, of the *Iriſh* intereſts. The Britiſh Miniſter muſt, for ever, be ſubſervient to the will, and intereſts of the Britiſh merchant—the Britiſh merchant muſt, for ever, be ſubſervient to his own intereſt. Should ever, then, ſuch an unfortunate competition of intereſts ariſe, I will not entruſt the welfare of Ireland to the impartiality of the Britiſh Miniſter, or the diſintereſted candour of the Britiſh merchant. I will not tranſfer from Iriſhmen, the privilege of conſidering the welfare of Ireland. I will not ſurrender *that* to any nation upon earth.

I think I argue from the neceſſary operations of the human paſſion on the human conduct, when I ſay, that the Britiſh Merchant will force the Britiſh Miniſter to be *Britiſh*, even on the ſubject of *Iriſh* affairs. And when

the queſtion of ſelf-intereſt once ſpeaks, it ſpeaks in a voice of thunder; the conſiderations of equity and juſtice are too feeble to be heard. In ſuch a ſituation, as well might you expect from the oyſter the ſagacity of human intellect; as well might you expect from the famiſhed tiger, the ſympathy of human feeling, as from the Britiſh Miniſter, and Britiſh Merchant, a due and impartial conſideration, as well as an honeſt and feeling conduct, touching the affairs of this our country.

But you are, at this moment, under the *influence* of *that* Britiſh Miniſter. We are; and I will rather truſt to the *influence*, than to the *power*, of the Britiſh Miniſter. I will not adopt any meaſure, which can annihilate the principle of regeneration. It is poſſible, that Iriſhmen may yet underſtand, and feel, and act up to, the true intereſts of Ireland. The principle, by which a foreign, detrimental intereſt, is kept up, in this country, is uncertain, and precarious. The motives of ſelf-intereſt, are certain, and eternal. They ceaſe only with the extinction of the human qualities, in human nature.

If I am an enemy to the principle of an Union, in whatever ſhape, and under whatever modifications you pleaſe; ſo am I diſguſted with the artful and inſidious language with which the queſtion is uſhered to the notice of the public mind. Much talk there has been, of the protection and generoſity of Great Britain, in the hour of our danger, and in the day of our diſtreſs: I am as happy as any man that liveth, in bearing teſtimony unto the protection and generoſity of Great Britain. I am a friend, a moſt hearty and decided friend, to the *connection* between Great Britain and Ireland; but I will not wound the delicacy of the friendſhip of Great Britain, by ſurrendering

rendering a Conſtitution I have already taken a ſolemn oath to maintain; nor ſhall I betray a truſt delegated to me by my forefathers, as the right of inheritance of my children for ever.

Much talk there has alſo been, of the ſacrifices which Great Britain is ready, and willing, to make, for the benefit of Ireland. She is forſooth, nobly and generouſly inclined, at the expence of her own intereſts, to concede unto Ireland, an incorporating, a legiſlative Union. She is the firſt to offer a boon, which neither reaſon nor dignity can refuſe! Is the intellectual mind of this country ſo fallen? Are we become ſo ſtupified, by our misfortunes? that we cannot diſcover, under this maſque, and habit of candour and diſintereſtedneſs, the vital form and principle of cunning and ſelfiſhneſs. *Timeo Danaos, et dona ferentes.* I will judge for myſelf. I will not truſt, on the queſtion of our importance as a nation, to the candour and generoſity of the Britiſh Miniſter. Let him gild the pill as he pleaſes, I will not ſwallow it. And here again, do all my feelings of national pride, and dignity, find full force and operation. I deſpiſe not for my country, the *kind offices* of any nation. I diſdain that ſhe ſhould be the *mendicant* of any nation; therefore, on that ſcore, I will not be under any obligation to Great Britain.

But, we are fertile in reſources. We can, and ought to contribute to the neceſſities of England. I would embark my laſt ſhilling in the cauſe of England—I would ſtand or fall by her; but I will not be cajoled by her. She ſhall not reduce me to bankruptcy, and ſay ſhe did ſo for my advantage. She ſhall not reduce me to beggary, under the pretext of an advantageous bargain. If

I am to be a bankrupt, and a beggar, I ſhall be: ſo with the ſolitary, but ineſtimable conſolation, that, with my eyes open, I have been a bankrupt and beggar'd myſelf, for a friend in diſtreſs. I will not ſubmit to the degrading ſtate of becoming bankrupt and beggar, under the pretext and cover of a commercial ſpeculation.

But this nation, from her ſituation, language, and conſtitution, ought to be, and muſt ultimately be, a part of Great Britain. I underſtand, and feel the argument. There are forty thouſand troops, in Britiſh pay, in Ireland; yet, with forty thouſand bayonets at my heart, I would tell the Britiſh Miniſter, he *ſhall* not, *can* not plant another Sicily in the boſom of the Atlantic. With as many advantages as antient Sicily ever poſſeſſed, we have to plead for us the encreaſed and encreaſing light of human nature, the uncalculated and incalculable ſtrides of the human underſtanding. In this country, we have as grateful a ſoil, as temperate a climate, as convenient ports, and as ſafe harbours, as ever Sicily poſſeſſed. We have a more hardy, and a more ſturdy race of inhabitants; and we have *that* which is paramount to them all, without which, theſe advantages are but as ſo many temptations to ruin: we have an intellectual mind, devoted to the cauſe of liberty and independence. It is impoſſible then, that the moſt profligate Miniſter that ever exiſted, can ſucceed in making us a province of any country. With a population of near five millions of people, with a territory of conſiderable extent and dominions; with the moſt convenient ports and harbours in the habitable world; with a brave and hardy race of inhabitants; with a benignity of climate, and fertility of ſoil, demonſtrated by every hour of our exiſtence, and every inch of our territory—it is impoſſible

ble that we were, in the diſtribution of nature, intended for a province. Travel from North to South, from Eaſt to Weſt, you will ſee the bounties of Providence. I want not the aſſiſtance of Divine inſpiration, to foretell; I am enabled, by the viſible and unerring demonſtrations of nature, to aſſert, that Ireland was deſtined to be an independent nation. Our patent to be a ſtate, and not a ſhire, comes direct from Heaven. The Almighty has, in mageſtic characters, ſigned the grand charter of our independence. The great Creator of the World has given unto our beloved country, the gigantic outlines of a kingdom, and not the pigmy features of a province. God and Nature, I ſay, never intended that Ireland ſhould be a province; and, by God, ſhe never ſhall.*

But, (continued Mr. Goold) if it had pleaſed Providence to deny unto my country theſe numerous advantages; if he had given unto it an unwholeſome climate, and an ungrateful ſoil; if every inch of our coaſts formed a precipice, inſtead of a ſhore, yet would I not repine at ſuch a ſtate, and lament the want of ſuch luxurious bebenefits of nature. I would praiſe that God that made me free and independent; and if, in ſuch a ſtate, and with ſuch a feeling, there could be cauſe for lamentation, it would be, that perhaps there exiſted, within my own view, a brave and generous people holding out, in the boſom of their country, all theſe glorious advantages, not as the ſources of freedom and proſperity, but as ſo many temptations to hoſtility and ruin. I do maintain it, Sir, that no nation can be called a free and independent nation, where it is not competent to it to make its

* Such was the ſenſation of the aſſembly at this moment, that they expreſſed themſelves by reiterated burſts of applauſe,

own

own laws. I caution my countrymen, againſt this act of folly and injuſtice; they have no right to diſpoſe of the inheritance of their poſterity. They are not only dupes, but falſe truſtees, who are willing to transfer for ever, not only the right, but the power of binding Ireland by Iriſh laws.

But, Sir, if I am an enemy to this incorporating Union, on the broadeſt principle on which it can preſent itſelf to the human underſtanding, it is not without emotions of horror and indignation, that I contemplate the ſeaſon fixed upon for the diſcuſſion of the ſubject. Is it brought forward to this country, in the calm moment of unbiaſſed collected volition? Is it brought forward, at the moment of our proſperity and ſtrength? Alas! three months have ſcarcely expired, ſince open rebellion ſtalked through your land. Is it, I ſay, at ſuch a ſeaſon, that a queſtion of ſuch magnitude, ſhould be offered to the cool, unbiaſſed judgment of the gentry of Ireland? At a moment in which they are panic ſtruck, they are paralized with fear, at a moment in which a principle of alarm has ſeized upon the dominion of the underſtanding—a principle, ſo quick and violent in its operation, as not only to miſlead the judgment, but ſuſpend the qualities of the heart; and by tending to make men forget, that the beſt way of avoiding danger is to meet it, it makes men fly from phantoms even into the jaws of death. Yes, but the Union will ſettle all your differences, heal all your wounds; it is a real panacea. No man ſhall prevail on me to take a medicine, which cures the diſtemper only by killing the patient.

But,

But, if from theſe, and many other coſiderations, this be a time unfitted for the reception of ſuch a queſtion among *us*; what ſhall be ſaid of the ſeaſon, in which it pleaſeth the Britiſh Miniſter, to offer this queſtion to the conſideration of the Iriſh people. Is it the day of her own humiliation, and the hour of her own diſtreſs, that ſhe chuſes as the moment for a fair, and, perhaps, feeling diſcuſſion? No! No! She has choſen the hour of ſplendid and deciſive victory—an hour, in which her navy (thank god,) is invincible, and her ſtanding army is unprecedently numerous and powerful. Is her language to Ireland, the affectionate language of a ſiſter? Does ſhe aſk Ireland, in a fair and open manner, to come forward and contribute to her wants, and endeavour to prop up her falling reſources? No! It is beneath the dignity of Great Britain, to put the queſtion to ſuch a teſt. No! No! She offers unto us better manners, better morals, more advantages commercial and agricultural, than we before poſſeſſed; ſhe offers unto us ſecurity, and peace, and good government—I have, in vain, looked for this diſintereſted offer, in the immutable nature of things—I have, in vain, ſearched for it, in the character of the Britiſh nation, or any nation upon earth—I know nothing leſs ſteady, than the abſtract fidelity and diſintereſtedneſs of any nation.

I own, I have not ſufficient intellect to comprehend, or faith to believe, that on this queſtion, of an incorporating Union, the Britiſh Miniſter is much influenced by the conſiderations of the welfare of Ireland. And here too, I am to look, in vain, for ſuch a principle, in the whole ſyſtem of his political life. I own, I have not ſufficient illumination of intellect to underſtand, or credulity

credulity to ſuppoſe, that this Union is intended to be the Union of wealth, with poverty for the purpoſe of general diffuſion—I own, I can well conceive this to be an Union between threatening bankruptcy, and ſpringing induſtry; I own, I can well conceive this to be an Union between expiring grandeur, and infant and growing proſperity. Sure I am, that I can foreſee, in this Union, the ſeeds and principles of enmity and ſeparation; and if it was on this ground only, with ſuch a feeling, as I have, on the advantages and bleſſings of the connection that exiſts between us, I ſhould be wanting to my own conſiſtency, to the eſteem I have for Great Britain, to the affection I bear my country, to the ſanctity of the truſt repoſed in me for the riſing generation, did I not declare myſelf in this public manner, and in this reſpectable aſſembly, hoſtile even to the broadeſt and faireſt principle of an incorporating Union, between Great Britain and Ireland.

Mr. Wm. Bellew ſaid, he would not have riſen to trouble the meeting with his ſentiments on the ſubject in debate, were it not for the aſſertion which had been made by a learned gentleman who had lately ſpoken. That gentleman had thought proper to aſſert, that the Catholics of Ireland were, to *a man*, friendly to an Union, and had imputed this their alledged favourable opinion, to motives which appeared to him of the moſt unworthy deſcription. Connected as he (Mr. Bellew) was, and in habits of intimacy with the leading gentlemen of that perſuaſion himſelf, a member of it, and from the opportunities he had of knowing the general opinion of the Catholics, on political ſubjects, he felt that to paſs over that aſſertion in ſilence, would, in fact, be giving his aſſent to it; he therefore found himſelf under

der the neceſſity of declaring, that the fact was not as ſtated. He ſaid, the Catholics of Ireland had given no general opinion on the ſubject. They had never met to conſider it; they probably would do ſo in the courſe of the week, and in the mean time, from his own intercourſe with them, he knew ſeveral who were inclined to one way of thinking on the ſubject, and ſeveral to the other. This, he ſaid, was ſufficient to ſhew how unfounded the aſſertion was, which had been made. As to the motives which had been imputed as the ground of the ſuppoſed partiality of the Catholics to the meaſure in queſtion, he, for one, as a man of honour, begged leave to diſclaim them in the moſt unqualified manner, as motives unbecoming men of principle or liberal feeling, and ſuch as, he truſted, never would form the baſis of any part of the conduct of the Catholics of Ireland. Mr. Bellew begged to be underſtood as not meaning to charge the learned gentleman with any intentional miſrepreſentation; he was incapable of making ſuch a charge againſt any gentleman, and entertained no doubt but that the learned gentleman had conceived the aſſertion which he made to be well founded. Having ſaid ſufficient on this ſubject, Mr. Bellew ſaid, that being on his legs, he would ſay one word as to the queſtion before the meeting. He remarked that much had been ſaid by gentlemen who oppoſed the original motion, which appeared to him to be quite irrelevant. The only point before the meeting was, whether this was a fit time to propoſe a meaſure, which goes in the moſt extenſive degree to alter our Legiſlative authority. whether ſuch a meaſure, if propoſed at a proper time, would, or would not, be for the benefit of this kingdom, was a queſtion not at all ſubmitted for debate. On the point before the meeting, he ſaid he could not heſitate

to ſay, that he was convinced in his own mind, it was not a proper time to propoſe ſuch a meaſure, nor could he conceive how the reverſe could be argued, unleſs it were alledged, that all which has hitherto been conſidered requiſite towards fitting the mind for cool and ſolemn deliberation on a point touching our deareſt intereſts, was wrongly conſidered ſo, and that oppoſite circumſtances to thoſe hitherto conſidered, as favourable to cool and temperate deliberation, were henceforward to be adopted as moſt ſuitable to it. He could not help being aſtoniſhed at ſeeing the learned gentleman who moved the adjournment, and of whoſe ſenſe and underſtanding he had the higheſt opinion, call for a month to deliberate. Did he want a month for the purpoſe of determining whether an Union would or would not be beneficial to Ireland? If he did, he (Mr. Bellew) would tell him no ſuch queſtion was before them, and that a month's deliberation would not perhaps ſuffice on ſuch a queſtion; but did he ſincerely want a month to conſider the only queſtion before them, viz. whether this was a fit time to propoſe it. Surely on that queſtion the learned gentleman could at once make up his mind one way or the other, and would hardly expect to be thought ſerious, when he expreſſed his apprehenſion, that by deciding now on ſuch a queſtion, the Bar would ſtand convicted of precipitation and raſhneſs, and would forfeit their claim to attention from the public. It had been argued, that by agreeing to the original reſolution, we determine on the merits of an Union at large; but ſurely every gentleman preſent well knows, that it is every day's practice in the profeſſion, to apply to the court to poſtpone a trial, on the ground of the public mind in the county from whence the jury is to come, being in that ſtate which is not ſuited to a fair, cool,

cool, and diſpaſſionate enquiry into the merits of the caſe to be laid before them. It is every day's practice to poſtpone trials on ſufficient proof that ſuch is the ſtate of the public mind in the county; and was it ever yet argued, that by ſuch poſtponement an opinion was pronounced on the merits of the caſe hereafter to be ſubmitted to diſpaſſionate inveſtigation. Mr. Bellew then ſaid, that he felt a full conviction that the public mind was not in a ſtate which fitted it for calm deliberation, and that therefore he would vote for the original motion; but that in ſo doing, he gave no opinion on the general queſtion, of the good or evil effects of an Union, which was not at all before him, and on which he had not made up his mind. He concluded by obſerving, that the queſtion had been ſo fully ſpoken to by thoſe on the ſame ſide with him, that without being guilty of repetition, of which he was not fond, it was not eaſy to ſay more on the ſubject, and that he would therefore trouble the meeting no further.

Mr. Orr.—Mr. Smith, I profeſs myſelf an enemy to the very principle of an incorporate Union with England. And in the preſent ſtate of the connection, England cannot offer an equivalent for the ſurrender of our independence. At a former period when the queſtion was conſidered, we were then in a very different ſituation. We had a Parliament controuled by the Parliament of England, and we had no trade or manufacture but, the making and exporting linen cloth. The direct importation of goods from the Weſt Indies, rum excepted, without firſt landing them in England, was prohibited—And the exportation of woollen goods was totally prevented. At that period, I ſhould have been more willing to have

ſubſcribed to the aſſertion of a gentleman, who has ſpoken on the oppoſite ſide of the queſtion, that the South was friendly to the Union." At preſent the South has every advantage it can deſire, without an Union. What remains to be regulated, except the channel trade? (Here there was ſome noiſe.) The gentlemen on the oppoſite ſide, have wiſhed the queſtion ſhould be debated with temper; I think I am doing ſo, I think I am arguing the queſtion fairly. But there may be perſons who would wiſh that it ſhould not be diſcuſſed with either argument or temper, well-knowing that ſenſeleſs intemperate oppoſition defeats its own purpoſe. Sir, I was ſaying that nothing remains to be regulated but the channel trade—And I think we have as good reaſon to expect an equitable ſettlement of the points ſtill in difference in our preſent ſtate, as with an Union. Experience juſtifies my opinion. For without an Union, we have obtained greater commercial advantages, than thoſe, which forty years ago mercantile intereſt would have thought a good price for our independence. By this meaſure we ſhould not gain any ſhare in the Eaſt-India trade as a nation. And as individuals, we may become proprietors, by purchaſing India ſtock. Another argument has been uſed for the meaſure. The vices of our own Government. Yet with all their demerits, there are ſtrong proofs of their being an Iriſh Government. The political and commercial acquirements of the country, from the year 1753, down to the preſent period, prove my poſition. But admitting the vices of our own Government I cannot think our ſituation would be improved by taking refuge from Iriſh folly and Iriſh injuſtice, in the wiſdom and liberality of the Britiſh Senate. The Iriſh Parliament will not ſuffer by a compariſon with the Engliſh Parliament. The Miniſters of each country can command their hollow majorities in their reſpective aſſembly.

If

If at the end of forty years Ireland owes twelve millions. England, in not a great deal more than double the time, owes five hundred millions. In ſtating the account, the ballance is greatly in favour of our own Parliament. But I heſitate not to ſay, that if the advantages of the Union were not doubted, we ſhould reject it.

No bribe ſhould tempt a nation to renounce their honour and abdicate their independence. The anceſtors of the different inhabitants of this country have always been zealouſly attached to liberty, and at one time or another, have in their turn bled in the defence of freedom. Be ye ſuch anceſtors to your children. Many of you have ſworn attachment to the Conſtitution. I too have taken that oath—I will keep it religiouſly—I hope you will do ſo. And I have done.

Mr. Stokes ſaid, had he the good fortune to have agreed in opinion with the gentleman who ſpoke laſt, and with the number of gentlemen on the ſame ſide who had preceded him, he certainly would not have obtruded himſelf on the attention of the meeting, to enforce obſervations which has been ſo ably enforced before; but he had the misfortune to differ from them, and he could aſſure the bar he felt it as a misfortune. For the gentleman who had brought forward the reſolution that day, he had the higheſt and moſt unfeigned reſpect. That gentleman well knew he had a reſpect not merely following the unanimous voice of the public, but founded on many years acquaintance. Were not that gentleman preſent, he ſhould ſay more; here he would not have ſaid thus much, but that he could not diſſent ſo widely from that gentleman's opinion, without

out feeling ſome apology neceſſary; but the meeting was called, to collect the ſenſe of the Bar upon the ſubject. That ſenſe never could be fairly collected, if any man there, ſuffered himſelf to be governed by any conſideration under Heaven, but the conviction of his own mind, upon the ſubject. He thought himſelf, indeed, peculiarly called upon, to obtrude himſelf, for a ſhort time, upon their attention. On his coming to the place of meeting to-day, the gentleman who has moved the adjournment, mentioned to me his intention of doing ſo. He had perfectly agreed with that gentleman in opinion, that the Bar, having once agreed to take the queſtion into conſideration, ought not, in conſideration of their country, in conſideration of their own character, to come to a precipitate deciſion. He had liſtened to all the arguments uſed by the gentlemen who had ſupported the contrary opinion; but had as yet heard nothing to ſatisfy him that opinion was ill founded; and while this was the caſe, he could not but feel that it would be mean and ungenerous in him to leave that gentleman unſupported. The numbers and talents of the ſpeakers who had appeared on the other ſide, and the ſkill which they had availed themſelves of the topics for popular declamation which it afforded, gave a colour of popularity to it, which encreaſed the reluctance which he muſt feel in coming forward to oppoſe them; but a reluctance on this ground alone, it was every man's duty to overcome. Nothing, in his opinion, had done more miſchief to this country, than that obſequious ſervility to whatever happened to be the faſhionable opinion of the day, and the hunting for popular applauſe, when not ſanctioned by ſelf-approbation. The one was the effect of baſe timidity, the

other

othet of a moſt depraved, corrupt, and deſpicable ambition. Nothing more prevented the public mind from being fairly collected, nor was more the bane of national proſperity. In that aſſembly, however, he had the pleaſure to think, that however his opinions might be condemned by any, he would not be condemned by any for avowing them. If any peculiar way of thinking, made him differ from ſome gentlemen, whoſe opinions he moſt reſpected, it was what he muſt lament; but he was ſure they would themſelves do juſtice to his motives. Differ with them indeed he felt he muſt, and moſt widely, but particularly on the preſent queſtion. The queſtion of taking one month's time for the diſcuſſion of the ſubject. He ever muſt think that the meaſure of conducting the political concerns of thoſe countries, by an united inſtead of a divided Legiſlature, was one that, though it might be *ultimately*, ought not to be *precipitately* decided, one way or the other. If, on due examination, it proves a bad one, let it, in God's name, be rejected for ever; and if rejected, after due examination, it will be rejected for ever; but precipitate diſcuſſion may produce heat and agitation, but never can produce ſtability. I own, Sir, that with great reſpect for the gentlemen who have gone before me, this queſtion has not been yet put upon the right ground. They have enumerated various diſadvantages flowing from a Union; ſome of them, I own, to my mind appear viſionary, and ſome much ſlighter than is contended for. No doubt in every change ſome diſadvantage will be felt ſomewhere. Change is in itſelf a diſadvantage; but the true way of conſidering this queſtion, is to look to the ſituation of the country. See whether ſomething muſt not be changed; and then ſee what change is the ſafeſt. He agreed moſt entirely with the gentlemen on the other

ſide,

ſide, who ſaid our ſituation was an awful one; it was ſo in the extreme. Is was unneceſſary to ennumerate the cauſes which made it ſo; they came too near us, and lay too freſhly bleeding in our memories, to require a recital; they muſt be preſent to the mind of every public body, that met to deliberate upon the concerns of the nation. Great and dreadful are the evils we have ſuffered; and no queſtion can be more near to our hearts, than how we are to find remedies for thoſe we have ſuffered, and how we are to guard againſt ſimilar ones in future. But can we do this by ſhrinking from the conſideration of any great meaſure that is offered us as a remedy? Can we do it, by deferring or obſtructing diſcuſſion on ſuch a ſubject? Is it not childiſh to ſay, that we will not conſent to the meaſure that is propoſed to us becauſe we muſt experience ſome loſſes, and give up ſome advantages nominal at leaſt, and perhaps real, without weighing or conſidering what is the real value of what we are to loſe, and what we are to get; what do we really give up; what are we likely really to obtain? Is this the part of enlightened politicians? Is it the part of rational men?

I am not now ſaying whether we ought or ought not to adviſe the nation to liſten to this offer, I am ſpeaking merely of the queſtion of adjournment; is a month too long a time for conſideriug a queſtion of ſuch moment to the whole Iriſh nation, not only its preſent inhabitants, but millions and millions of Iriſhmen yet unborn? Does it become this learned, this enlightened body, trained up in the ſobriety of judgment, which is the ſureſt teſt, and the happieſt conſequence of wiſdom; to report before they examine, to try without evidence, to decide before they hear? Surely Sir, amongſt other conſiderations, it will

it will not be denied me, that a great part of the evils and benefits of an Union, muſt depend upon the reliſh or diſreliſh of it, that may appear among the various claſſes and deſcriptions of people in this country, and without going into minute particulars. Surely, Sir, it may be collected from this night's debate, that we are as yet totally in the dark upon this ſubject; but, Sir, it is needleſs to go on with an ennumeration of this ſort, every gentleman who hears me, will perceive how numerous and important are the various matters that muſt be weighed in conſidering this ſubject, before we can tell on which ſide the balance will turn; then, Sir, is it not rational and manly to look our ſituation ſteadily in the face, to probe our wound to the quick, without ſhrinking, and ſee whether if we can trace out the ſource from whence our diſorders ſpring, it may not be in power to apply a radical cure; let me then ſolemnly aſk this enlightened and thinking aſſembly, one moſt ſerious queſtion, let them aſk it of their own hearts and underſtandings, is or is not, has or has not, the nature and modification of our connection with Great Britain, been the cauſe of all or any of the misfortunes of this iſland? If it has, is it not worth the ſerious conſideration of every Iriſhman who feels for his native country, to enquire, whether among the infinite modes in which the nature of that connection may be varied, it may not be altered for the better, and how? I hear ſome diſſatisfaction expreſſed at what I have ſaid, but, perhaps, gentlemen did not apprehend me; I did not ſay our *connection* with Great Britain was the cauſe of our misfortunes, nothing can be more oppoſite to the whole train of my opinions on this ſubject; I ſpoke only of the nature and modification of this connection, a ſeparation of the two countries, I hold to

be an idea the wildeſt and moſt dangerous; for thoſe who conceived it, if any ever ſeriouſly conceived it, muſt have forgotten the geographical ſituation of the two countries, their hiſtory, and the various ties that bind their intereſts together; had, indeed, Providence been pleaſed to have fixed the foundation of this iſland five hundred leagues farther into the ocean, far from the crooked politics of Europe, trained up to defend herſelf alone, and with the natural advantages ſhe ſo eminently poſſeſſes, ſhe might be fully ſufficient to her own ſecurity; but nature and fate have ordained it otherwiſe; placed as it were in the boſom of Great Britain, guarded as it were by her, from all the reſt of Europe; the two nations, now for more than five hundred years connected together, under a common Sovereign, identified together. As one nation, as to all the other powers of Europe, uſing the ſame laws, language, manners, and religion, the natives of the one country received as natives in the other, bound together by the ſympathies of friendſhip, kindred, common properties, common intereſts, ſerving without diſtinction, in the armies and fleets of their common Sovereign, endeared by mutual dangers, and triumphing in mutual victories, the man who would attempt to rend them aſunder, muſt be a deadly enemy to both, or a moſt ill-judging friend to either. I can conceive nothing more dreadful than ſuch an attempt, and nothing more fatal than its ſucceſs. It would be tearing the arm from the body, agonizing both, producing debility in the one, and effecting the total deſtruction of the other; every true patriot in either country will feel, that their mutual Union is their beſt individual ſecurity. Jealouſies between her nation, who are, perhaps, injudiciouſly taught to conſider themſelves as ſeparate, are hardly to be avoided. But,

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ſure I am, that the enlightened patriots of both countries, will one day ſee, that every progreſs made towards, rooting out jealouſy, diſtruſt, and all idea of ſeparate intereſt, is a progreſs towards mutual ſecurity and mutual happineſs. Is it not then worth while to enquire, how this can be obtained, and whether the nature of our connection may not be improved, whether the two nations may not be ſafely, ſucceſsfully, and happily drawn together more cloſely. Their preſent form an Union, is that of an united crown and divided legiſlature; is it not a queſtion well worth diſcuſſing, in the preſent ſituation of this country, whether an united crown and united legiſlature, might not be a form of Union more permanent, leſs apt to promote jealouſy and diſcord, and beſt providing for the ſecurity and happineſs of both. For my part, Sir, I freely own it appears to me to come to this alternative; if the Legiſlatures of the two countries are really independent, and the parliament ſhould be the faithful organ of the will of the people, the cauſes of jealouſy exiſting between two countries, and eſpecially commercial countries, with ſeparate rights of trade, being, as they would be in that caſe given way to and indulged by the parliament of Ireland, would riſe from a war of inflammatory recriminations, and protecting or prohibiting duties, to an angry and violent attempt at a ſeparation between the two countries, and a war, which, conſidering the preſent intimate connection between them, I cannot but look upon as a kind of civil war, that would be more fatal and ruinous in its progreſs, and probably end in ſhaking Great Britain to its centre, and perhaps in the ſevere humiliation of Ireland. On the other hand, if the one Legiſlature is to be kept in a real, though not in a nominal dependence upon the other; is there not too, a great probability of this being effected

by a dark and crooked policy, fatal to the political character of the people ſo governed; might it not be looked upon as neceſſary policy, to ſhield that Legiſlature from the people whom it repreſented, by promoting diſunion among themſelves, and thus depriving them of their natural ſtrength, or by the eſtabliſhment of a ſyſtem of influence, fatal to probity and morals, or by both? And will not the bad effects of ſuch a ſyſtem, open, at laſt the eyes of the people, and make them ſee, that an united legiſlature is the only ſecurity for permanent tranquillity and permanent happineſs? And is it not always better to anticipate experience, and not wait for the leſſon of misfortune? In the hiſtory of Europe, we find nations united for a time by one Crown and ſeperate legiſlatures, and have they not all ſince, from a ſenſe and feeling of the weakneſs and bad political effects of ſuch a conſtitution—have they not all ſince, either conſolidated or ſeparated? Theſe reflections, and many ſuch preſenting themſelves to my mind, incline me to think a Legiſlative Union a meaſure neceſſary for the protection, ſtrength, and happineſs of theſe two united kingdoms, and of courſe advantageous to each. But upon ſo great a queſtion as this, involving ſuch a variety of conſiderations, and that may be conſidered in ſo many different lights, it would be arrogant preſumption in me to ſay, that I may not have fallen into a miſtake, which more mature reflection would correct; but do not the gentlemen on the other ſide, alſo ſay, that they are by no means pledged to the opinion, that an Union may not hereafter be conſidered by them as a meaſure advantageous for Ireland? Do not theſe very circumſtances demand a temporary adjournment, and more matured diſcuſſion of this queſtion? And would it be wiſe, in the firſt inſtance, to adopt a motion, which goes to decide againſt it altogether—(a cry of no, no.) I admit

I admit it does not on the face of it import to be an abſolute rejection, but will it not be conſidered as ſuch by the public, who will not attend ſo much to the cautious manner in which it is worded; but conſidering the Bar to have met to day merely for the purpoſe of deciding on the queſtion of Union or no Union; and will, if we come to an abſolute deciſion to day, take for granted, and perhaps not in that be much miſtaken that it was intended as a final one; but to meet the queſtion on the ground which the framer of the reſolution ſeemed to put it, he owned he would not be of opinion that it was either *improper* or *dangerous* to agitate it at preſent; if the meaſure was as neceſſary a one as it appeared to him to be, it never could be deferred without danger. The two countries were at preſent, with exception of the rebels alone, in a ſtate of cordial agreement and good will, who could tell the moment when cauſes of diſcord might ſpring up between them, that would make all negociation upon a ſubject of this kind impoſſible, and as to the danger of diſcuſſing it at preſent, it certainly did not ſtrike him in the ſame light as it did the gentlemen on the other ſide; the chief danger which he thought to be apprehended from the diſcuſſion of it was that it was from its nature a ſubject fit to be uſed by popular declaimers as a topic of popular inflammation, and the debate of this night had not removed that apprehenſion; if even in this place and in that aſſembly, where of all others, calm and enlightened diſcuſſion was to be expected; ſome gentlemen had not refrained from that ſpecies of eloquence that is addreſſed to inflame the paſſions rather than convince the underſtanding; it certainly was to be dreaded that much more of that would take place in the diſcuſſions which this ſubject muſt undergo and ought to undergo among the people at large. This was from the very nature of the ſubject. a

danger

danger always to be apprehended, let it be diſcuſſed when it will. But he owned he could not but think there is leſs danger of this at the time, when the minds of the people have been ſobered by misfortune, when we have been taught by ſevere experience, the danger of uſing, and the danger of attending to popular declamation; and the miſchiefs, the dreadful miſchiefs, to which popular agitation may lead. He thought no time was ſo likely for the people ſeriouſly to ſeek for a remedy, as when they ſeriouſly felt the evils of their peculiar ſituation. And here as on the queſtion in general, he thought there was alſo ſomething to be enquired into and known of the opinions of the people, with regard to this queſtion, before we could pronounce with certainty on thoſe very dangers of which, they ſeemed ſo apprehenſive. All the gentlemen who moved the adjournment aſked, was time for mature diſcuſſion; if the truth of the propoſitions, which the gentlemen on the other ſide had brought it, was ſo clear as they contended, would appear leſs ſo after one months conſideration. Can truth ever be injured by examination? and has an averſion to the permitting of it ever been conſidered as a teſt of its conviction? He owned, he thought too for the ſake of the character of a fuller and more complete inveſtigation of this ſubject ought to be adopted, and would be more becoming than a percipitate deciſion. This aſſembly ſtood high, and he would ſay deſervedly high, in the eſtimation of this country; he really knew not where there could be found in the whole kingdom an aſſembly ſo numerous, with judgments equally exerciſed, equal to them in information in talents and independence. Of all bodies in the community, it would leaſt become them decide without examination. The preſent was no time for ſhrinking from it, we were come to that criſis in our hiſtory, when we muſt look our ſituation ſeriouſly in the face, and aſk ourſelves what muſt be the remedy?

Separation

Separation from England was an idea only inculcated by that power who wiſhed to divide, in order to conquer, and to conquer, only in order to blaſt the proſperity of both. If the people get their due weight in the country while the Legiſlatures are the diſtinct. I think it is eaſy to ſee a gradual progreſs mutual complaints, plunging us at laſt into a ſtate moſt calamitous and moſt deſtructive. We may to be ſure, ſhutting our eyes to the dangers that are before us, and with the thoughtleſſneſs, peculiar to our national character, hobble on in our old ſyſtem ſome years longer; but where will it end, and are we not treading on a dangerous mine when we know not to what time, or from what quarter it may ſpring and overwhelm us with deſtruction, and among a people alternating between the extremes of political apoths and the ebullitions of frantic rebellion. All the movers of the adjournment aſked was, that in matters of ſuch infinite moment, they would reflect before they acted, conſider before they decide; and ſurely that requeſt was not unreaſonable. He thanked the Bar for the kind attention with which they had honoured him, an attention which when he plainly ſaw the majority of their opinions differed ſo widely from his, he could not but regard as a proof of their liberality and candour; again repeated that he would not have obtruded himſelf on their attention. After the debate had been ſo long protracted, if it had not been that agreeing in opinion with the gentleman who moved the adjournment from the firſt, and hearing nothing, he has changed his opinion ſince; it would have been acting a mean and ungenerous part to have left that gentleman unſupported.

Mr. GERAGHTY ſupported the motion for adjournment, and argued, that the objection which was ſo confidently relied on, againſt the expedience of diſcuſſing the

the queſtion of Union at this time, from the peculiar ſtate of public affairs, was utterly untenable, becauſe it is the very extraordinary and diſtracted condition of this kingdom, which creates the very neceſſity for the meaſure; and it is very curious logic to advance a ſtate of diſorder and derangement, as an objection to a propoſal which is produced by that ſtate itſelf, and expreſsly brought forward for its amendment and relief. If in private life an individual, by a ſeries of miſconduct and extravagance, diſſipates his fortune, and his affairs become embarraſſed, ſo that nothing but a ſale of his eſtate can ſave him from ruin and impriſonment, it would be highly ridiculous on propoſing that ſale to him, to aſſign as an objection, that which is the very circumſtance which makes the ſale neceſſary—namely, that his finances are diſtracted. It has been objected, that during this war Great Britain has rejected every application for change and innovation in her internal government, becauſe there was a revolutionary ſpirit afloat, which made it dangerous, and might extend that change to revolution; and therefore it is aſked, why make the preſent propoſal to Ireland at this particular period? He anſwered, that it is this ſame revolutionary ſpirit which is ſo high in Ireland as to call for ſome immediate radical meaſure, to abſorb and to extinguiſh it. In England it is repreſſed by the confidence of the nation in the excellence and firmneſs of their Government. But in Ireland it is encouraged by defects in the civil adminiſtration, which are not denied, but which ariſe from the peculiar frame of the Iriſh Government, and the imperfect connection between the two countries, and which defects will be removed and eradicated by an incorporated Union. The exiſtence of theſe undeniable faults in the Iriſh Government, is made the pretext for demanding

demanding changes in the Parliamentary eſtabliſhment, under which pretext is concealed the deep plan of effecting a democratical Legiſlature and ſeparation from England. As is proved by the Parliamentary report of the proceedings of the United Iriſhmen, that the hiſtory of this country, ſince the year 1782, eſtabliſhes the growth and progreſs of a diſpoſition in this country to ſeperate, and that the moment has come in which this diſpoſition muſt be combated, or it will prevail, and that at this inſtant there is no alternative between a reform, which will produce revolution, and an incorporated Union, which will prevent ſeperation. The power of Parliament to adopt this meaſure is incontrovertible. It has carried the ſucceſſion to the crown, and interrupted hereditary right; it has determined the time of its own duration, and frequently varied it; it preſcribes its own qualifications, and determines what deſcription of the people ſhall exerciſe the elective right, and under what circumſtances; and it has, in ſome inſtances, taken away the right of election altogether. Theſe, and many other inſtances, eſtabliſh what has been called the omnipotence of Parliament, becauſe upon the pure and genuine principles of the Engliſh Conſtitution, the two houſes of Parliament, when aſſembled, are not viewed in any delegated capacity, but are conſidered as the very body of the nation itſelf, and therefore has the full controul of its own conduct. It never was heard that the Engliſh Parliament, at any period ſince its foundation, declined any great national arrangement from its own incompetence, and wiſhed an appeal to the people. This idea is deſired from ſome other ſyſtem, and ſeems particularly taken from the undigeſted and unmatured Conſtitution of France.

And in the ſame error is it ſaid, that the propoſed incorporated Union would be a violation of the Conſtitution, as if the Conſtitution of this country were one ſimple and indiviſible thing, which is alſo a French idea, inſtead of being, as it is, the ſyſtematiſed accumulation of the different legiſlative proviſions of judicial determinations, which, from time to time, have followed the public neceſſities, which the national wiſdom has occaſionally modified, according to new exigencies, and new combinations of circumſtances, and which experience has improved and conſolidated; and therefore it is unintelligible to aſcribe an individual's nature to ſuch a complicated whole, or to ſay that a partial modification is inconſiſtent and repugnant to that; the genius and character of which is to be modified, varied, extended, or contracted, as the neceſſities, the liberty, and the happineſs of the ſtate may require.

Mr. M'Clelland oppoſed the original reſolution, and ſupported the adjournment.

Mr. Leader.—If the gentleman who has juſt ſat down, had not poſitively declared himſelf friendly to the amendment, I ſhould certainly, from his mode of argument, have conſidered him a zealous ſupporter of the original motion—what was his deſcription of the ſtate of the country—he was pleaſed to repreſent the loyal party triumphant, and from thence to infer, that the opportunity was favourable for a due diſcuſſion of this great and unexampled meaſure. What—does he mean not to calculate on the re-union to the ſtate, of thoſe who have been diſaffected, or of thoſe who have been claſſed with the diſaffected; or does he conſider it impoſſible, that we can ever become in this country, what

what we always ought to have been—one family—one body—influenced by the ſame opinion, and actuated by a common ſympathy. Let me aſk him, is it the conſent of a part of the nation, that he only looks for, in the conſideration of a queſtion which, if carried, is intended, at leaſt, to bind the whole nation for ever. Is it liberal, is it wiſe, is it juſt, to adopt ſuch a mode of conduct; all thoſe who have ſpoken in favour of the adjournment, have preſſed the idea of a Legiſlative incorporating Union with Great Britain being by *poſſibility* advantageous; ſo that whilſt ſome of the ſupporters of the adjournment have, in their ſpeeches, clearly ſhewed, that the country was not in a fit ſituation to have the queſtion of Union agitated; others have, by dwelling on the *poſſibility* of an Union being advantageous, admitted the extreme importance of the diſcuſſion; and they have together ſuperſeded the neceſſity of any further argument, in favour of the original motion, by being themſelves, by their arguments, its moſt unanſwerable ſupporters. Since the queſtion has been read from the Chair, I regret that it has not been more cloſely adhered to, as read by the learned and much reſpected mover (Mr. Saurin), it was moſt ſimple, it ſtruck me as containing two propoſitions; the firſt the innovation of the conſtitution, the ſecond, the time in which that innovation was attempted; the firſt part of the motion is ſelf-evident,—an incorporating Union with Great Britain, would amount to a diſſolution of the exiſting government, much leſs to an innovation; on the ſecond ſubject, I would make an obſervation—what I aſk is the preſent ſituation of the country—is it not in the hands of a foreign army—to my argument it is not material whether its preſence is or is not neceſſary, but the fact is ſo.—Is this then the time for the diſcuſſion? Can

the Heſſian or the Highlander, feel an intereſt or a ſympathy with us, in a queſtion which affects the deareſt and moſt important intereſts of ourſelves and our poſterity. I have no doubt but that they would protect us from the enemy. But the foreign force in Ireland is eſtimated at 40,000 men in arms, (a gentleman from the oppoſite ſide replied not ſo many), I may be wrong—I would not, for the purpoſe of the argument, intentionally exaggerate it; my authority, however, is a publication, which is aſcribed to a gentleman at the head of the military department; I do not ſay that this force, abſtracted and ſeparated from the people, and under the guidance of one perſonage, would be employed to any unworthy purpoſe—certainly not; but this I muſt ſay, that it immanacles the mind, although it may commit no inſult to the perſon. I heard, no later than yeſterday, that perſons had been executed under ſentences of court-martial, within a few days, in an adjacent county; ſcarce a paper is without ſome heart-rending account of popular exceſſes, and can it be wiſe to diſcuſs a queſtion which can only tend to inflame and exaſperate the public mind, and if carried, muſt have all the appearance of being extorted by force, and not the reſult of inclination. I do confeſs, that I eſteeem it an outrage on our feelings, and an inſult on our humanity, that a queſtion of this momentous nature ſhould be coquetted into our country, before its bleeding wounds are bound up, before we have had time to condole at our reſpective loſſes, and before we have heard from our families, the details of injuries which they might have ſuſtained, or calamities which they might have ſuffered, in a never to be too ſincerely regretted civil conteſt. Without being the dupe of faction, or the ſlaviſh and ſubmiſſive tool of power, I feel myſelf, from the turn which the debate has taken, to be in a moſt embar-

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raſſed predicament; the ſupporters of the adjournment, profeſs a deſire to have the merits of the meaſure canvaſſed, though the reſolution precludes the diſcuſſion, as *dangerous* and *impolitic*, and they complain that no ſatisfactory arguments have been advanced, though they themſelves, have not travelled out of the circle of deſultory obſervation. For one, I ſhould be happy to give my aid in the diſcuſſion of the commercial part of the queſtion. Excluſive of the innumerable ruinous conſequences of an Union; in my mind, there can be no queſtion of the impolicy of expoſing ourſelves to be underſold by the Britiſh merchant, in the home market, for the only compenſation which Great Britain can offer, and that an extremely deluſive one, an unreſtricted, inſtead of the at preſent modified right to endeavour to underſell the Britiſh merchant, in the Britiſh market. My anxiety, however, to confine myſelf to the queſtion, prevents my going further than to declare my opinion on this ſubject; but, I confeſs, I dread extremely, that under the exiſting adminiſtration, the national voice cannot be fairly collected on this meaſure; acts of terror and of torture, leave a laſting impreſſion on the human mind, and cannot fail to operate on the immediate public conduct of a large portion of the community, and it ſurely would be infinitely better, that the meaſure ſhould never be diſcuſſed, than that it ſhould receive a hollow and inſincere approbation.

And here let me deplore the ungenerous, the unmanly conduct of the Britiſh Cabinet. Why was not this queſtion propoſed on any former occaſion. This Cabinet was well acquainted with our danger before the Rebellion. If the Union was a wiſe and unexceptionable meaſure, and calculated to prevent future conſpiracy

and

and rebellion? Why was it not uſed to counteract and diminiſh the horrors of that conſpiracy from which we can ſcarcely be conſidered to have eſcaped? Has any man of that Cabinet ever before publicly expreſſed himſelf inclined to this meaſure? Why in 1785, when the affairs of Ireland were ſo perturbed, did not Mr. Pitt expreſs the expediency of this Miniſter. We recollect that the Adminiſtations of thoſe times were running a courſe of popularity, in their conduct to Ireland. We know that the ſtubborn and independent ſpirit of our country at that time made it neceſſary for his Majeſty's Miniſter to weigh with trembling ſolicitude and anxiety; though not with the expanded views of genuine magnanimity, the reciprocal intereſts of the two countries.

Would the old Volunteers of Ireland have accepted the propoſal of an Union? Since then in 1785, when the public mind was unbendingly devoted to the public intereſts, and when the affairs of the country were agitated in the Engliſh and Iriſh Parliaments for ſome months, the Miniſter, and thoſe who have deſerted the oppoſition of England to ſupport the Miniſter, did not think it adviſeable to ſuggeſt the expediency of an Union, ſhall I, in 1798, when there is an immenſe armed foreign force in the country, and while it is under the influence of panic, eſteem it a proper time to propound and agitate ſuch a queſtion. No Sir, on the contrary, I ſhall entertain an encreaſed ſuſpicion of the expediency of the meaſure from the circumſtance, alone of its being attempted at a period ſo peculiarly unfavourable to a fair, diſpaſſionate, and honourable inveſtigation. It is no argument, "that the augmented danger of the State requires it," becauſe the ſame force which would deſtroy the exiſting Government, would ſeparate the two kingdoms. A learned gentleman

tleman, (Mr. GRADY) has been pleaſed to ſay that the Catholics of the South, (Waterford, Limerick, Cork,) "to a man, are anxious for the meaſure." No other Executive Director ever had ſo rapid information. It is ſcarce poſſible that the rumour of Union could have reached thoſe parts of the kingdom, when the gentleman takes upon himſelf to ſay, that remote and diſtant bodies of men were unanimouſly agreed to the meaſure. I am ſatisfied that at this hour, that the rumour has not reached the extremities of our iſland. The gentlemen has ſpoken of his intercourſe with, and information from thoſe quarters of the country. The ſtatements of fact has been already flatly contradicted by a Catholic gentleman, (Mr, BELLEW,) but who has given this learned gentlemen this excluſive information. There are many near me as deeply connected with the South, as he is. Than myſelf, no man can reſpect and revere the Catholics of that quarter more highly. But no meeting has been convened, no reſolution has been paſſed. It is notorious that this meeting is the firſt which has been ſummoned. For my part, I deplore from my heart any reſtrictions under which that great maſs of Iriſhmen may labour. But I do not think it conſiſtent with the uniform wiſdom of the enlightened men of the Catholic body, to let in the flood of Britiſh taxation, to ſurrender the independence of Ireland, and lay their liberties and commerce at the feet of the Britiſh Adminiſtration *for ever*; on the wretched preſumption that they would not be more abuſed. The Catholics have every thing to expect from the augmented liberality of their countrymen, equal and impartial juſtice. But in common with the Proteſtant, they will look with diſguſt at an innovation, which in the preſent ſtate of the two countries, would diminiſh their rental, by depreſſing our home-trade; and would deſolate our country, at the future aggrandiſement

of

of Britain. I roſe merely to deliver a few words on the time this quaſtion is propounded, and I hope that I may not be entirely unſucceſsful in bringing back this meeting to the only queſtion which is before us for our conſideration and deciſion, "the danger and impropiety of attempting this innovation in the preſent diſtracted ſituation of our country."

Mr. PLUNKETT, very ably proved the extreme danger and impropriety of agitating the queſtion of Union at ſuch a time as the preſent. Should the Adminiſtration, however, propoſe a Union now, he had no doubt but it would be carried. Fear, animoſity, a want of time to conſider cooly its conſequences, and forty thouſand Britiſh troops in Ireland would carry the meaſure. But in a little time the people would awake, as from a dream, and what conſequence would then follow, he trembled to think. For himſelf, he declared he oppoſed an Union, principally bacauſe he was convinced it would aocelerate a total ſeparation of the two countries. He diſſuaded the meeting from adopting the motion of of adjournment, becauſe it would give a handle for further miſrepreſentation to thoſe libellers who had already dared to miſrepreſent the motive and conduct of the Bar. It would give them an opportunity to ſay that the adjournment of the queſtion argued the ſenſe of the Bar to be for a Union. Thoſe audcious libellers had already ventured to miſrepreſent in a public print the meeting of the Bar, as a military body, on Friday laſt. He could not believe the inſolent libeller was one of the body. But ſome perſon, within or without, had taken occaſion in ten minutes after that meeting was held, to carry to the Caſtle the falſehood, that the meeting broke up becauſe the good ſenſe of the Bar thought it not right in them to agitate in any manner the queſtion of an Union.

Union. He continued to argue, with great force and energy, upon the impropriety of the time choſen to bring this meaſure forward, and made many ſtrong and pointed obſervations, well ſuited to the occaſion.

Mr. LYNCH, (a Catholic Barriſter) concurred in opinion with Mr. Bellew, and ſtated to his knowledge, the Catholics of Galway and other parts of Connaught were ſtrongly againſt the meaſure of an Union.

Mr. FRANCIS DOBBS now roſe, and ſaid, that after the long debate that had taken place, he would treſpaſs only a few minutes on the time of the aſſembly. He ſaid that if any doubts had remained on his mind, the arguments he had juſt heard from his learned friend and colleague, would have removed them. He was therefore decidedly for the reſolution propoſed by the truly reſpectable Barriſter who opened the buſineſs of the meeting. By doing ſo, he did not mean to pledge himſelf on the great queſtion of an Union. He was, however, free to confeſs, that ſo far as he had conſidered the ſubject, he was of opinion that none would, or perhaps could be propoſed, that would be advantageous to Ireland; but he might poſſibly find himſelf in the melancholy ſituation of conſidering it as the leaſt of two evils. This could only ariſe from our own improper conduct as a nation. He therefore truſted, that every Iriſhman of every deſcription, would ſee the neceſſity of healing meaſures; and that our own Legiſlature following up ſuch opinions, would enact ſuch laws in the enſuing ſeſſion, as would put an end to the queſtion for ever. He ſaid he was happy to hear the patriotic ſentiments expreſſed by many eloquent ſpeakers who had proceeded him. He was alſo happy to ſee the warm

approbation with which thoſe ſentiments were received, by nearly the whole of that aſſembly. He hoped the ſame zeal would follow them to every place where their influence extended, and that at length all animoſities among ourſelves, would yield before the great and deſirable objects of conſtitutional freedom, and national proſperity.

Mr. WEBBER ſaid, that he had come into that room determined not to take a part in the debate—it was a ſacrifice of a public, to a private feeling; but that the inſinuation which had more than once been made againſt gentlemen holding office—(he is a chairman of ſeſſions) had induced him, though reluctantly, to depart from that determination. He truſted he was above being influenced by ſo paltry a motive. He was ſure he was above ſhrinking from the ſuſpicion of it. He conſidered the queſtion of adjournment, though that leaſt, if at all diſcuſſed, to be the only one then before the aſſembly. That ſhould have his vote, and not on the grounds of an evaſion of the original queſtion, which he only lamented, was not more fully and fairly before them.

For his part he was not one of thoſe who thought the Bar as a body, however reſpectable, were at all called on to decide on, or diſcuſs the queſtion; nor did he think it one on which they were likely to have much weight. The gentlemen who thought otherwiſe, urged that diſcuſſion, had avowed their purpoſe to be, to influence and lead the public mind on the ſubject. If they were to have that effect, it ſhould at leaſt be on mature and diſpaſſionate deliberation. The learned gentleman who had propoſed the original reſolution, had objected to the conduct of Government as precipitate, in giving

giving the public mind only the interval of from October to the meeting of Parliament, to conſider the ſubject. Other gentlemen, who had not thought proper to emulate that dignified moderation of his truly reſpectable friend, had inveighed, and in proper terms, againſt this conduct as indecent. Would thoſe gentlemen now come forward, and urge the aſſembly to decide, in one *night*, upon one heated, declamatory debate, a queſtion, which they reviled the government for not giving years to conſider. If they would undertake to legiſlate for the public mind, at leaſt they ſhould aſſume the appearance of deliberation, and ſacrifice ſomewhat of their zeal to their conſiſtency.

Much had been ſaid in ſupport of the original reſolution, reſpecting the inaptneſs of the time to diſcuſſion or deliberation, and the conſequent impropriety of ſtirring ſo momentous a queſtion at ſuch a juncture; and a learned gentleman (Mr. Plunket) with his uſual talents, had forcibly impreſſed that objection. He had aſked, and triumphantly, whether a people, one half of whom were ſuffering under puniſhment, and the other under outrages and perſecutions, were in a ſtate of mind to deliberate calmly on a great political ſubject. For his part he did not think that the active citizens who conſtituted the firſt deſcription, were then, or at any time before, in the deliberate habit of mind required by his learned friend; neither did he think them likely, at any future time, to be found in that ſtate of philoſophic compoſure, which his learned friend ſeemed ſo ſanguine to expect. It was not ſo with the wretched victims of their ferocious wickedneſs. To thoſe who remained of them, the preſent moment was perhaps the fitteſt for deliberation, which had ever or could occur to them in their lives.

After the firſt paroxyſms of grief or diſtreſs, the mind is in its moſt deliberative ſtate. Calamity purifies the underſtanding, and corrects the heart. It ſoftens down the guſts of paſſion, and diſpels the miſts of prejudice. At what time then can men be ſo qualified to reflect, or ſo forcibly called to a juſt view of their intereſts? He did believe they were capable of conſidering thoſe intereſts calmly and diſpaſſionately; but if they were not, he was ſure they were not likely to be aſſiſted by the example of this aſſembly, in which calmneſs is clamoured for, and deliberation declaimed on.

The Chairman then put the queſtion, and a diviſion took place:—

Ayes, for the Adjournment,	32
Noes,	166

On which the following Reſolutions were put and carried:—

At a moſt numerous meeting of the IRISH BAR, convened by public notice, on Sunday the 9th of December, 1798, at the Courts, and from thence adjourned to the Exhibition-room, William-ſtreet, the following Reſolutions were agreed to:—

AMBROSE SMITH, Eſq. Father, in the Chair.

Reſolved, "*That the meaſure of a Legiſlative Union of "this kingdom and Great Britain, is an innovation which it "would be highly dangerous and improper to propoſe at the "preſent juncture of the country.*"

It was then reſolved, *That the Chairman do leave the Chair, and that* WM. SAURIN, *Eſq. do take the ſame.*"

Reſolved, "*That the thanks of this meeting be preſented to our worthy Father,* AMBROSE SMITH, *Eſq. for his very proper conduct in the Chair.*

Reſolved, *That the foregoing Reſolutions be publiſhed.*

Signed by order,

WM. RIDGEWAY, SECRETARY.

PROTEST.

The underſigned Members of the IRISH BAR, having attended at a meeting of that body on Sunday the 9th inſtant, at which meeting it was propoſed by Mr. SAURIN, to come to the following Reſolution:—

"Reſolved, *That the meaſure of a Legiſlative Union of "this kingdom and Great Britain, is an innovatian which it "would be highly dangerous and improper to propoſe at the "preſent juncture of the country.*"

And the propoſed Reſolution having appeared highly objectionable, as well as unſeaſonable; to the underſigned, the queſtion of adjournment for one month was moved, which latter motion was negatived by a large majority, and the orignal Reſolution put and carried. The underſigned think it incumbent upon them to lay before the public the reaſons which have induced them to diſſent from ſo great a number of their brethren.

Firſt, Becauſe the original Reſolution could not be adopted without betraying the Bar into a precipitate diſapprobation of a meaſure, the term of which were unknown, and of which conſequently either approbation or diſapprobation muſt be premature, and could have no other tendency than by a haſty cenſure to prevent the diſcuſſion of a great and important queſtion, in which the conſtitutional, landed and commercial intereſts of this kingdom, as well as the ſafety of the empire, were materially involved; whereas the propoſed adjournment evidently

evidently tended to mature the queſtion in the mind both of the Bar and of the public, and to promote calm and deliberate diſcuſſion.

Secondly, Becauſe in reſolving that the meaſure of a Legiſlative Union of this kingdom and Great Britain is an *innovation*, it appears to the underſigned that it was intended virtually to decide againſt the principle of *any* Union, however fair, liberal juſt, and wiſe; ſuch Union might be in its terms and proviſions, inaſmuch as altho' a change or alteration may be introduced into any ſyſtem, not only conſiſtently with, but in furtherance of the ends and eſſential principles of ſuch ſyſtem; yet the term *innovation* is always conſidered, and univerſally accepted as the introduction of ſomething in its nature, foreign from, and diſcordant with that previous ſyſtem or conſtitution of things upon which it is intruded, and tending to the ſubverſion and deſtruction of its eſſential principles; and therefore alſo it appears to the underſigned, that the firſt branch of the Reſolution carried, inſinuates a poſition which the latter branch of that Reſolution evades

Thirdly, Becauſe the chief grounds on which the original Reſolution was attempted to be ſupported, namely, that the ſtate of things in Ireland, and the agitation of the public mind, render it dangerous and improper to introduce or debate the queſtion of Union at preſent, appear to the underſigned to fail, inaſmuch as it does not ſeem to them that the preſent political organization of this country has been found to be productive of ſo much tranquillity or happineſs, as to induce a friend

friend to Ireland to ſhrink at this particular time, from all idea of alteration; and alſo, becauſe if any agitation has taken place in the public mind, it has evidently been occaſioned by attempts to diſſolve the connection which ſubſiſts between this country and Great Britain, which attempts, long previouſly projected, having been lately made; and the deſign being by no means relinquiſhed, the underſigned conceive, that if a ſtrengthening of that connection be deſirable as oppoſing an obſtacle to the ſucceſs of ſimilar attempts in future; no more proper period than the preſent could be choſen for introducing or diſcuſſing a meaſure which had this ſtrengthening of the connexion between the ſiſter countries for its object.

Fourthly, Becauſe it ſeems to the underſigned that the propoſed adjournment led to a calm deliberate diſcuſſion, without having any tendency to ſuppreſs the opinion of the Bar, upon the queſtion of an Union, and would, if adopted, have had the good effect of preventing the Bar from committing themſelves upon a queſtion, upon which they are at preſent not ſufficiently informed.

Fifthly, Becauſe the underſigned do imagine, that on ſo complicated and extenſive a queſtion as that of an Union, (on the advantages of which, ignorant as they are of the conditions on which it ſhall be propoſed, they expreſsly diſclaim pledging themſelves to any opinion), the public will be decided by a full and adequate diſcuſ-

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ſion of its intereſts, and will not be dictated to upon ſuch a ſubject, by any deſcription of men, however reſpectable.

N. B. The names marked thus (*) *are of Barriſters who were not preſent at the Diviſion, but who agree in ſentiment with the minority.*

St. George Daly,
J. Jameſon,
*William Smith
Thomas Monſell,
C. K. Garnett,
*John White
*William Johnſon,
*Archibald Redford,
James M'Clelland,
*William Turner,
*John Schoales,
J. Homan,
*W. Norcott,
*Thomas Vickers,
Thomas Grady,
John Dwyer, Jun.
John Beresford,
R. G. Leſlie,
Thomas Scott,
P. F. Henchy,
J. Keller,
Henry Brook,
Robert Torrens,
James Gerahty,
F. W. Forteſcue,
*Richard F. Sharkey,
J. D. Clarke,
Thomas Morgell,
Wm. Longfield,
J. W. Stokes,
John Ball, Jun.
Henry Cole,
*William Roper,

FINIS.